

**Crip Native Woman:  
The Hispanic American Philippines and  
the Postcolonial Disability Cultures of US Empire**

by

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my parents, Charlita and James, whose love and friendship have created bonds that operate on a physics that displacement can't bust.

To David: you've saved me so many times; words can't travel there.

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I had a question about the world that I needed to answer. While painfully cliché that really was the reason I pursued the tiring and winding path of this doctorate. Now I have the happy task of thanking those that inspired such questioning and those that helped to reformulate it for much better ends.

I'm fortunate to have gone to school where I did. I was able to assemble an amazing committee of interlocutors. Any moments of clarity, depth of thought, or intellect can all be traced back to conversations that I've had with each of you. Thank you so much Sarita, Maria, Brandi, Deirdre, and Victor. You're all brilliant and I admire you so much. I couldn't have collaborated with a warmer and generous group of scholars than you all.

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Languages program, I am glad that you taught me about Ethnic and American Studies. This project *greatly* benefits from your critical mentorship at a very critical time (which basically feels like approximately 1000 years ago at this point).

My parents met near a military base in the Subic Bay, Philippines. Born in the twilight of the era of martial law and with a migration characterized to me as an escape from violence, it seemed that I was always destined to form words in languages that conjured such violent pasts. Like returning to a place I've never been, Olongapo City was my place of birth and the origin point of this project. Nevertheless, my white Nebraskan father, a US Naval officer, and my brown mother, hailing from the ironically named MacArthur Leyte in the Visayas, demonstrate that something beautiful, like love, can emerge from the intersection of US militarism and compromised Philippine sovereignty. They taught me to love. They taught me to think. Everything is their fault and I love them for it.

I often daydream that my siblings and I are part of a third world liberation strike force like the X-Men but better. To Danica, Brandilyn, Jeffrey, and Ashley, I thank you for putting up with me. Even though you've made fun of me for being the "Golden Child" that, perhaps wanted too much, I entrust these words as a "making-sense" of a cultural and linguistic distance, which, perhaps made us want too little or demand less than we deserve.

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## INTRODUCTION:

*Bayani*

Artists' Revolution is an advocacy group that organized against perceived political apathy and governmental corruption leading up to the 2010 Philippine presidential elections in which Benigno Aquino III was elected to office. The administration of Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (2001-2010) was fraught with corruption, scandal, and violence equaling, and by many measures even surpassing, the Marcos dictatorship. Sensing similar political unrest that characterized the Marcos era *Batas Militar* (1971-1981) [Martial Law], Artists' Revolution sought "to break the hold of apathy, cynicism, and hopelessness that seem[ed] so entrenched in our country." Their most prominent mode of activism was the Juana Change Advocacy project. This digital and social media project produced several film-shorts featuring political and satirical content meant to "raise the bar for good governance, fight corruption and bureaucracy, and develop a more genuine vision of democracy and justice."<sup>1</sup> The film-shorts' critical themes range from corporate greed, to widespread poverty, the export labor economy and, most recently, the US-ASEAN Summit. Communicating the political critique is Juana Change, a "central character of the Juana Change Advocacy performances and events," portrayed by actress-activist Mae Paner. While many comedic, political videos featuring Juana Change were and continue to be published by the

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<sup>1</sup> Mae Paner. *Bayani. Juana Change Advocacy Project*, 3 May 2016. Web. 12 May 2016. <<http://juanachange.com/blog/>>.

group, I focus my critical attention on a particularly salient one that bridges the epistemological and economic realms.

The film is titled “Bayani,” meaning “hero” in Tagalog, and used as a slogan by the Philippine human export economy to refer to the massive monetary remittances of overseas’ Filipino workers (OFWs). “Bayani” features Juana Change as an OFW who works as a domestic helper that “naghihilod ng mga kubeta” [scrubs toilets] in Italy. She is on a return flight to Rome having just visited her family in Imus, Cavite. In Tagalog, Juana is conversing with her seatmate who remains unseen for the majority of the film. She comically and critically talks about her experience as a contract laborer, the precarity of asymmetrical economics, and the stresses that migration places on her family. The most scathing criticism is reserved for the familiar national rhetoric characterizing OFWs as “mga bagong bayani”:

Tawagan kami baka “ang mga bagong bayani.” Leche!

Hindi ko naman kailangan ng mga ganyan ng mga klaseng papuri!

Kailangan ko ng pera. Kung kaming binibigyan ng mga trabaho,

Hindi ako kailangan umalis ng bayan! Hinihirap naman sa lahat ng mga OFW,

magmula sa anak ko hanggang sa Presidente! Shet!

[They call us “the new heroes.”

Fuck that! I don’t need those kinds of accolades.

What I need is money. If they gave us jobs, then I wouldn’t need to leave the country.

They really rely on us OFWs, from my own child to the President. Shit!]<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Following this diatribe Juana asks her very attentive seatmate to snap a picture of her to send to her family. Despite her hardships, she remarks, “siyempre hindi akong nagdadala ng mga picture na akong umiiyak” [of course, I don’t take pictures of myself crying]. After taking a “cute” pic, she turns to her seatmate, who she describes as looking like a “Euro General” or a “member of the Gucci Gang.” Finally, as her seatmate visibly removes his bowler, she remarks “alam mo? May mukha ka” [you know what? You look familiar]. At the film’s end, Juana remarks on the uncanny familiarity of her interlocutor who is revealed to be José Rizal, wreathed in divine light, with the Philippine Hispanophone novel *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) in hand. The video ends with a translated quote from Bertolt Brecht that reads “Kawawa ang bayang walang bayani. Pero mas kawawa ang bayang nangangailangan pa ng bayani” [Deprived is the nation without heroes. But even more deprived is the nation that is in need of them].<sup>3</sup>

The satire of this video is articulated through several sedimented layers of Filipino history and languages. Juana Change, here, critiques the continued dependence of the Philippines on the remittances that OFWs invest in the domestic economy and the discourse that labels their efforts “heroic:” “I don’t need those kind of accolades.” A valuable analysis that “Bayani” provides is that the “mga bagong bayani” [new heroes] discourse co-opts nationalist histories of heroism in order for the state to profit from the racialized gendered labor of overseas Filipina workers. The film invites a return to some of the core values of heroism upon which the Philippine nation was founded—a return evoked by the divine citation of José Rizal. To be clear, in analyzing “Bayani” this way, I do not seek to minimize the effort, labor, and material contributions of OFWs to the Filipino and global economy. Rather, much in accordance with the Juana Change Advocacy campaign, I seek to destabilize the elegizing rhetoric that does little to

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

critique the economic inequalities that maintain Filipinas' continued precarious status as "servants of globalization."<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, I wish to draw attention to the different forms of incapacity that this film-short conjures in its critique. Juana Change draws a transhistorical connection between the plight of the Filipina migrant laborer and the epistemological idealism represented by the *Pambansang Bayani ng Pilipinas* (Philippine national hero) José Rizal. As Juana Change's presumed guardian angel materializing in an historical moment of great need, Rizal evokes a narrative of liberationist politics that set into sharp relief the economic dependencies that make the Philippines into what Robyn Magalit Rodriguez calls, "a labor brokerage state."<sup>5</sup> Rizal is not only evocative of such liberationist narratives, but literally cradles the most famous one in his arm: the *Noli*.

From the arms of Rizal, the central question that I ponder for the duration of this project is the following: What does it mean when the geographic home of a constellation of texts *does not* coincide with its linguistic home? This question reflects on the queer existence of Spanish writing by Filipinos in the Philippines, a "peculiar" place not generally considered a part of the Hispanic world despite its status as a Spanish colony for over 300-years.<sup>6</sup> This existence is queer because it demonstrates the "ungrounded [linguistic] ground" upon which Filipino cultural politics is articulated.<sup>7</sup> Language is never a passive medium for the consolidation of political sovereignty and postcolonialism. Nevertheless, there exists a long tradition of Hispanophone

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<sup>4</sup> Rhacel Parreñas, *Servants of Globalization: Migration and Domestic Work* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> Robyn Magalit Rodriguez, *Migrants for Export: How the Philippine State Brokers Labor to the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Josep Fradera, *Filipinas, la colonia más peculiar: La hacienda pública en la definición de la política colonial, 1762-1868* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Judith Butler, "Contingent Foundations: Feminism and the Question of Postmodernism," *The postmodern turn: new perspectives on social theory*, (1994), 153-170.

writing in the Philippines that is ignored by Hispanists globally and largely inaccessible to Filipinos. For reasons that will be clarified below, our own national literatures are read in translation. I suggest that this postcolonial situation, the multiple and mutually unintelligible linguistic registers of Philippine culture, bridges conversation with disability studies. Consider the following framing: engagements with Filipino cultural production and historiography are circumscribed by the unavoidable linguistic incapacities, and thus inaccessibility, that characterizes the colonial archive in which such texts are inscribed. How do we make sense of such incapacity, linguistic debility, and inaccessibility in the face of an intellectual history that signifies cognitive sovereignty, anticolonial liberation, and revolutionary politics? By turning to contemporary cultural production to introduce and to make sense of this paradox we can see that the “peripheral embodiment” of the Filipina migrant lionized by the Philippine state appears alongside a novel *whose original language she cannot read*. This scene not only evokes an international division of labor that is orchestrated through the racialized feminization of the global economy, it also illustrates, within the Philippines, an intellectual division of cognitive capacities wherein certain minds produce liberationist narrative sacralized in nationalist historiography on behalf of the Philippine nation. At the same time, certain feminized bodies are prefigured as performing certain kinds of manual labor on behalf of the Philippines. What are the historical conditions of possibility in which such a mismatch between language, labor, and geography could even be entertained?



Figure 0.1 "Bayani"

The Philippines was ‘discovered’ by Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. Spanish colonization, however, didn’t begin until the first permanent settlement was established on the island of Cebu with the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi in 1565. Much of the archipelago came under Spanish colonial rule, with the significant exception of the Muslim populations of the south. The Philippines was administratively ruled through the Viceroyalty of New Spain or modern day Mexico. For over three centuries, the Philippines was a pivotal stop in the Manila-Galleon route. Galleon ships sailed from Spain through Acapulco to Manila facilitating the passage and exchange of commodities, culture, and people. The Philippines remained a Spanish colony until 1898 with the conclusion of the Spanish-American War. Revolutionary anticolonial sentiments among Filipinos are historically argued to have most prominently emerged in 1872, with the execution of “Gomburza,” a portmanteau of the Filipino priests Mariano Gómez, José Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora who were sentenced to death by hanging for sedition. I should say that while 1872-1898 is historiographically understood in the



Philippines as the epoch of “national consciousness,” it has also been argued that revolutionary anticlerical sentiment had a much earlier origin with peasant uprisings in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>8</sup> In any event, Gomburza is an important historical moment because this execution would inspire the anticolonial Philippine “Propaganda Movement” in Spain organized by such intellectual luminaries, the *ilustrados*, like Mariano Ponce, Marcelo del Pilar, Graciano López Jaena, and perhaps the most famous of them all, José Rizal. The writers, scholars, and statesmen associated with the Propaganda Movement can be, I suggest, associated with a longer tradition of Filipino intellectual writing called by some the “Philippine Enlightenment,” the “cerebro de la nación” [brains of the nation]. José Rizal is the intuitive historical middle of this intellectual discourse of Filipino enlightened thinkers. In particular, he is famous for penning the foundational *Noli Me Tangere*, whose appearance we see even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century political satire above, and in *El Filibusterismo* (1891), which is required reading for almost every Filipino...in translation. The *ilustrados*’ political essays in the periodical *La Solidaridad*, their prolific scholarship in the social sciences, and their artistic and literary production is often narrated as the textual canon through which revolutionary consciousness was articulated—a consciousness that gave impetus to the eventual beginning of the Philippine Revolution in 1896, prompted by the execution of Rizal by firing squad.<sup>9</sup> The Philippines then became a colony of the United States following the Spanish-American War (1898) and the Philippine-American War (1899).

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<sup>8</sup> Reynaldo C. Ileto, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press), 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Megan Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012). See also Thomas’ advisor Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of Nationalism*, “Creole Pioneers” (New York: Verso Press, 2006), 49-68 and *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anticolonial Imagination* (New York: Verso Press, 2007).

The Spanish language constellated a robust 20<sup>th</sup> century archive of cultural production that passes under the radar of much US empire studies of the Philippines. It is therefore important to contextualize Spanish's acquisition by Filipinos. The purpose of this context is to establish how Spanish shifted meaning from its 19<sup>th</sup> century integuments to the ways in which it was deployed under US colonial rule. Spanish, to be sure, was and continued to be an elite language spoken by landed *hacendados*, politicians, artists, professionals, and bureaucrats. However, the contours of elitism that attach to Spanish at different historical moments shift in meaning. As I'll demonstrate in various moments throughout this project, what was an elite language mutates into an ambivalent critique and tool of negotiation with US imperialism. Much of this ambivalence is captured through the ways that cultural production in Spanish captures changes in political economy instantiated by sequential empire. Because of the racialized classed meanings of Spanish used by Filipinos, my project's method, archive, and theoretical apparatus seeks to understand the capacity and incapacity to engage with Spanish at different historical flashpoints in Philippine history through a racial materialist analytic.

I draw on the kinds of racial materialist lenses deployed in queer of color critique, woman of color materialist feminism, and postcolonial studies to understand how the political valences of culture reflect relations to the modes of production in political economy.<sup>10</sup> For my purposes, I

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<sup>10</sup> For models of cultural critique that this project draws on see: Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Grace Hong, *The Ruptures in American Capital: Women of Color Feminism and the Culture of Immigrant Labor* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006); Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and the monumental *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, eds. David Lloyd and Lisa Lowe (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997); Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1, "Race, Writing, and Difference" (Autumn 1985), pp. 243-61.

view “culture” as it is produced through literary production as an index of the hierarchies of social relations that shape the nation through dimensions of difference such as race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability. Additionally, through a racial materialist analytic I view the ways in which “race,” as the centerpiece of the nation-building project, index asymmetrical economic relations. In this theoretical vein, I want readers to understand cultural production in Spanish in the Philippines as a vital and impressive case study to understanding materialist relationships conveyed through the political economies of culture. Race cannot be divorced from class relations and vice versa. Once more, because nationalist projections of a racial national subject are inevitably male and subsist on deprived, debilitated, and disabled forms of femininity, race and class as vectors of analysis cannot be understood adequately outside of an intersectional feminist paradigm. All of these analytics work in tandem to craft what I understand as a “postcolonial cripistemological” understanding of multilingual archives and multiply colonized Philippine landscapes of cultural inquiry. In this context post/colonial literature and its interpretation have a very particular meaning. I turn to Frederic Jameson to map out how I “read” literature as allegorizing the social, political, and economic relationships I track above.

Situating his intervention for a politically conscious hermeneutic of literary texts within the misdirected analytical vigor of structuralist, post-structuralist, and psychoanalytic paradigms, Jameson construes the interpretation of narrative as only ever meaningful “...if they are retold within the unity of a single great collective story...the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity.”<sup>11</sup> Directly referencing Marx, Freedom is defined as a futurity wherein human capacities are cultivated beyond the realm of Necessity (the sphere of

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<sup>11</sup> Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 19.

actual material production) and are not extracted for surplus to satisfy capitalist directives and definitions of productive humanity. Interpretation, then, is a political act that should always pay attention to the material relations of production and class struggle, rather than tangentially related epiphenomenal theories of human subjectivity, such as psychoanalysis, which may read desire and identity as metaphysical properties outside of the modes of production. However, Jameson's excavation and stabilization of narrative interpretation as always already a political act, relies precisely on how the hermeneutic horizons in his conception of history perform or reference the Real.<sup>12</sup> Jameson avers, "the literary or aesthetic act...always entertains some active relationship with the Real." However, the Real is not some symbolic external reality but is constructed after the reality of textual and material production: "the literary or aesthetic act...cannot simply allow 'reality' to persevere inertly in its own being, outside the text and at a distance. It must rather draw the Real into its own texture..."<sup>13</sup> It seems then that the contingent relationship that the Real has to the political text creates the conditions of possibility for what Jameson argues as a politically vital mode of interpretation of power as it inheres in textual acts. The fact that Jameson must argue for a submerged (unconscious) political rewriting of interpretive logics that reference systematic and global processes of capitalist exploitation is *precisely* because of capitalism's pervasiveness. That is, the planetary reach of capitalism has led to its ultimate obfuscation rather than a global illumination of its palpable logics of dispossession, exploitation, and genocide. The manifold modes of abstraction that fetishize material relations and modes of production as unchecked objective reality have made these relations so submerged, so unconscious, and so foundational that it must now be interpreted as a "political unconscious"

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 75-80.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 81.

subtending textual production and its subsequent interpretation. Jameson, essentially, retextualizes theoretical maneuvers such as the Lacanian Real and the Althusserian “absent cause” as reflections of the modes of production thus materializing them historically, wresting them from a fantasmatic and metaphysical non-narrativity and non-representation. Given Jameson’s extended meditation of Althusserian “expressive causality” and the analysis of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, which both platform the muscular work of his theory of political interpretation, I take his rematerialization of the Real as a primary locus of his intervention.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, I take it further to consider how the medium through which fantasy projection materializes literarily should also be problematized--in this case, Philippine Spanish. What if we were to think of the retelling of literary allegory “within the unity of a single great collective story...the collective struggle to wrest a realm of Freedom from a realm of Necessity” as not only a story about the positive or affirmative cultivation of human capacity not beholden to market forces and capitalist directives? What if we also consider the possible deficits, debilities, and impairments that colonially mark the path towards such a utopian promise of human capacities? To consider such questions, I position this dissertation to consider a different kind of archive mostly ignored for almost a century.

Despite protracted contact with the “Hispanic world,” the Philippines today is not an Hispanophone country. In 2007, Spanish was cited as being spoken with “dominio nativo” [as a native language] by 0.5% of the Philippine population.<sup>15</sup> The diffuse and narrow use of Spanish

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 20-49.

<sup>15</sup> Rafael Rodríguez Ponga, “Nuevas perspectivas para la lengua española Filipina,” 18 Feb 2009. Web. 9 May 2016.

in the Philippines belies its cultural and historical importance to nationalist historiography. Indeed, there were Filipinos that continued to write in Spanish long after the nationalist period. Additionally, there are contemporary invocations of such Hispanicity in diasporic Filipino cultural production. What do we make then of a political canon seen as fundamentally important in solidifying Filipino national identity articulated in a language that is inaccessible to many for whom such an identification pertains? What do we make of such a linguistic incapacity to access Filipino writing? Might we consider writing through and about such incapacity as a form of postcolonial crip culture? What I mean to accomplish with the term “postcolonial crip culture” is to intentionally align postcolonial and crip theories to explain the historical and colonial status of Spanish as an absent presence in U.S.-based studies of Philippine literature, culture, and politics.

In order to understand the maneuvers and choreographies of postcolonial crip culture, this dissertation assembles an archive of the “Hispanic American Philippines.” I would also suggest a suitable Spanish translation of this archive (one that I very much prefer to the English version): “las filipinas hispanoamericanas.” Only secondarily is such a label meant to reference canonizing moves in Hispanic American Literature seeking to assemble the literatures of dozens of national projects under a single moniker. Through such a moniker we can compare across many national traditions of writing and can feasibly, if controversially, elaborate an Hispanic American experience. For this project, “Hispanic American” is meant to keep in analytical tension the histories of sequential imperialism in the Philippines under Spain and then the United States. Routinely referencing a late 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition of Spanish writing by Filipinos, the Hispanic American Philippines describes early 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural production that exceeds and questions

the discrete segmentation of nationalist historiography. It is meant to highlight the understudied legacy of protracted Hispanic modernity under US colonial rule. I also use the “Hispanic American Philippines” as a way to understand contemporary invocations of Hispanism, Spanish, and the *ilustrado*, in diasporic Filipino cultural production. I mean to further emphasize the transnational elaboration of “las Filipinas hispanoamericanas” in Anglophone texts, which cite the Hispanic Philippines. In essence, this project’s archive prioritizes the Hispanic American Philippines, which means the study of Spanish writing by Filipinos under U.S. rule, on the one hand, and the study of contemporary literatures in English that cite Spanish Philippine archives, on the other.

I place the Hispanic American Filipino literary-cultural archive within the critical maneuvers of postcolonial disability studies in order to interrogate the linguistic landscapes that enable and disable certain cultural formations within the field of Filipino Studies. At the same time, I position Filipino Studies-derived understandings of language-loss, colonial critique, and multiple identities in order to re-evaluate the cultural and geopolitical biases of Euramerican Disability Studies. Toward this end, I suggest we understand the Hispanic American Philippines as finding articulation through what David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder have termed “narrative prosthesis.”<sup>16</sup> They define this as a representational technique whereby disabled characters are represented essentially as prosthetic devices to consolidate and alternately hide able-bodied assumptions that shape our understanding of narrative protagonism. The protagonist of post/colonial “ablenationalist” historiographies, for instance, is never represented with disabilities. Rather he is portrayed as possessing normative if not superlative physical and

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<sup>16</sup> David T. Mitchell and Sharon L. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, “Narrative Prosthesis and the Materiality of Metaphor” (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000) 47-64.

cognitive faculties requisite to represent an entire nation. The substratum upon which such protagonism rests is a disabled, generally feminized, prosthetic excised from postcolonial narratives of cognitive and revolutionary excellence. The prosthetic elaborated in this study's archive of the Hispanic American Philippines is what I call the "crip native woman."

"Crip Native Woman: The Hispanic American Philippines and the Postcolonial Disability Cultures of US Empire" posits a queer of color<sup>17</sup> reading practice to understand the ways that colonial representations of disability order gender and sexual normativity with the racial national project known as the Philippines. I call this reading practice "postcolonial cripistemology." The paradox of linguistic incapacity that frames reading the Hispanic American Philippine archive belies another foundational aporia that has actually been historically productive in assembling the various constituencies of the Philippine archipelago, across several languages, under multiple sequential colonial projects, into a stable national project wherein we think we know what the Filipino "race" is. The aporia articulates two logically contradictory poles: the Enlightenment Subject and the Filipino *ilustrado*. The former is a "transparent" and racially unmarked universal subject while the latter draws on such universality but to articulate a racial national subject, which is, by its very definition, a particularized non-universal and even a parochial subject.

Theorizing the space between these subject positions "Crip Native Woman" argues that masculinist "Filipino intellectual cultures" forged in the colonial crucible of anti/postcolonial enlightenment discourses align marginal, feminized, and indigenous Philippine identities with impairment. The alignment of these disabilities in Hispanic American Philippine culture is rhetorically deployed through the figure of the "crip native woman." The impairments

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<sup>17</sup> Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).



constitutive of colonialism attach to the crip native woman who is either represented for rehabilitation or, at times, deemed too perverse for treatment or inclusion into the national body politic. Colonial disability shifts meaning depending on cultural, historical, or linguistic context. For my purposes, I generally mean the insinuation of social, political, physical, and cognitive underdevelopment deemed pathological to a “healthy” and stable Filipino national body. The “body” here can mean the literal physical organism of the Filipino body or the imagined community of the Filipino nation. This slippage allows me to understand the ways in which underdevelopment obtains meaning through the articulation of a racial national subject shaped by gender and sexual normativities. Those embodiments constitutive of Filipino intellectualism--the Hispanic or Hispanophone and generally mestizo *ilustrado*--deploy gender/sexual heteronormativity to construct an enlightened racial national subject endowed with robust cognitive ability. Those that are representative of this national normate body are generally inheritors of the intellectual patrimony and cognitive capacities of the Hispanic Philippine Enlightenment. My point is that racial embodiment is rarely easily divorced from intellectual able-mindedness. In this sense, I suggest more generally that historical constructions of racial nationalism, particularly in anticolonial and postcolonial nation-building projects, are political fields in which sovereign intellectual and physical capacity construct robust political subjectivity. In short, the racialized body, whether disabled or able-bodied, is contiguous with the cognitions, whether able-minded or deficient, that are imagined to pertain to a national body.

### *Filipino intellectual culture and the crip native woman*

“Filipino intellectual culture” is an historical, cultural, and political formation I use to frame this dissertation’s Hispanic American archive. Its parameters depend on what I posit as a

foundational polarity structuring the cultural production and historical episodes in Filipino history that this project samples. The polarity is, on the one side, what has been termed the Philippine Enlightenment, its Hispanized epistemology, and its mestizo inheritors.<sup>18</sup> On the other side are the marginal, peripheral, effeminized, feminine figures that can never access the enlightened capacities beatified in Hispanic enlightenment discourse. In this project, this colonial Other takes various shapes and forms: the savage Chinese footbound girl, the socially pathological Filipina mestiza, the indigenized “trigueña” supercrip, an indigenous trans-embodied poetess, or the Overseas Filipina Domestic. While the framing of the emergence of such peripheral figures as the ontological underside of a more enlightened masculinist discourse is certainly not a novel insight, I understand the negative ontology furnished in this intellectual polarity as indicative of and proliferating as a discourse of “postcolonial disability.”<sup>19</sup> What I mean by negative ontology is that dominant discourses, like the Enlightenment, frame what they are through what they are *not*. In this case, the Filipino *ilustrado* frames himself as not disabled and intellectually capable to navigate the uncertainties that obtain under colonial rule. This means for our purposes that the sovereign subjectivity of the Hispanized mestizo *ilustrado* secures his power through the acquisition of cognitive capacity and robust intellectual development by articulated subjects that do not possess such capacities. The underside of this sovereignty is the various dissident subjects characterized variously by under- or uneven cognitive, physical, social, and political development. They, indeed, can never embody the nationalist subjectivity evocative of the Philippine Enlightenment, its culturo-political

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<sup>18</sup> Resil Mojares, *The Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2006).

<sup>19</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

interventions, and its proliferations beyond the nation. I capture this discursive projection of abject alterities, unpalatable for the Philippine national body, through what I call the “crip native woman.”

I excavate this figuration to map an alternative genealogy of Philippine Enlightenment. An Hispanic American archive in the Philippines breaks apart a segmented historiography that structures Filipino American critique of US imperialism. In order to understand the 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary iterations of Philippine intellectual cultures, it’s crucial to understand what preceded them in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century nationalist period. While limiting and too general, it can be helpful, at least at first, to think of the various instantiations of Philippine Enlightenment between roughly 1870 to the contemporary moment in terms of “waves.” The “first” wave of the Philippine Enlightenment is historiographically located in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (1870-1896) before the advent of American imperial rule. The “second” wave is precisely the repetition of this nationalist story of intellectual liberation from Spain under the duress of U.S. “benevolent assimilation” during the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the Second World War (1897-1945). The second wave of enlightenment ends with the Japanese bombardment of Manila in which Intramuros, the first Spanish colonial enclosure in Manila, is obliterated along with most of the Hispanic Filipino elite.<sup>20</sup> While the periodizing move of a “wave” theory for this particular postcolonial enlightenment project may have its limitations, it is pedagogically useful in elaborating how such masculinist nationalist tropes are recycled and reanimated towards new capitalist ends. Indeed, this might make a strong case for the examination of a “third” wave of Filipino Enlightenment in which another colonial encounter is staged: between “minority politics” and the spectre of “the

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<sup>20</sup> Adam Lifshy, *The Magellan Fallacy: Globalization and the Emergence of Asian and African Literature in Spanish* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012).

Philippine Enlightenment.” While such a “wave model” of Philippine intellectual discourse has some didactic value, I am careful to not parse out history in a monolithically segmented way wherein discrete historical epochs are imagined as not interacting.<sup>21</sup> In fact, I seek to introduce under-investigated Hispanic American Philippine literature to demonstrate the ways that the Spanish and U.S. imperialisms are, in fact, not separate discrete historical events in the Philippines. I explore how different historical moments in Philippine history and cultural production under and after U.S. Empire (in the aftermath of Spanish colonialism) affirm intellectual robustness through a shared marginal discursive underside.

Within each of these “waves” of postcolonial enlightenment, the crip native woman is the underside of Filipino intellectual cultures. This feminized and effeminized symbol is often an incoherent body in the able-nationalism subtending Filipino intellectual cultures yet whose (dis)articulation is foundational to consolidating the cognitive and physical capacities of the *ilustrado*. While naming this figure prioritizes the unassimilated corporeality of the feminine and the feminized into the mestizo national body, I also suggest that corporeal unassimilability means *also* an inability to obtain within the able-mindedness articulated in the Philippine Enlightenment. This means that the realities of the body and its able-bodiedness are not separable from the historical articulation of the postcolonial “mind” and its able-mindedness. The political effect is clear: postcolonial able-mindedness requires the radically un-assimilable alterity of a body that is “too queer to rehabilitate” as Jasbir Puar has provocatively put it. I suggest that we can excavate this underside by elaborating the Hispanic American Philippines

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<sup>21</sup> Such historiographical segmentation has been critiqued by the likes of Rey Ileto in “Outlines of a Nonlinear Emplotment of Philippine History,” *The Politics of Culture Under the Shadow of Capital*, eds. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham: Duke UP, 1997), 98-131.

through a cultural studies paradigm, in order to understand the intellectual division of cognitive capacity that crystallizes our ideas around Philippine nationhood and racial identity. The Philippine Enlightenment and its historical aftereffects permeate the formation I call “Filipino intellectual cultures.”

I derive my definition of culture from transnational feminist and queer of color critique and elaborations of cultural studies.<sup>22</sup> Lisa Lowe’s *Immigrant Acts* was foundational in reorienting analysis of cultural formations in Asian America as responding to unequal distributions of material resources in a political economy that historically has relied heavily on Asian migrant labor. Culture, she argues, responds to the contradiction between the United States’ assumptive role as the polestar of liberal inclusionary democracy and its penchant for acquiring cheap migrant labor that would routinely be excluded from the franchise of citizenship. Exploitative labor conditions are constitutive of liberal democracy. Culture emerges to wrestle with, respond to, and critique such a contradiction—these “immigrant acts” of cultural critique shift the moral discourse around enfranchisement, transnational migration, and labor conditions. Similarly to Lowe, Neferti Tadiar’s attempt to reorient cultural studies in her essay “Challenges for Cultural Studies Under the Rule of Global War” prioritizes “bringing cultural practice to bear on our actionable understanding of the logics underwriting and undermining the prevailing social

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<sup>22</sup> For the several considerations of “culture” in cultural studies that I greatly distill above see: Neferti Tadiar, “Challenges for Cultural Studies under the Rule of Global War,” *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*, eds. Martin Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu (New York: NYU Press, 2016) 15-32; Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996); Roderick Ferguson, *Aberrations in Black: Towards a Queer of Color Critique* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003); and the monumental *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, eds. David Lloyd and Lisa Lowe (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

order, that is, of bringing culture to bear on politics (instead of only analyzing the politics of culture, as in more conventional forms of ideological critique).”<sup>23</sup>

What the US academy has come to term “queer-of-color critique” draws heavily from Asian American materialist feminism. In *Aberrations in Black*, sociologist Roderick Ferguson claims that because “it fosters both identifications and antagonisms, culture becomes a site of material struggle.”<sup>24</sup> Cultural formations emerge in response to the contradictions instantiated in the dialectic between liberal capitalism and revolutionary social theory. This means that revolutionary theories like Marxism actually concord with the bourgeois respectability politics at the core of liberal capitalist exploitation of labor. This concordance transpires insofar as “the terrain in which formations seemingly antagonistic to liberalism, like marxism and revolutionary nationalism, converge with liberal ideology, precisely through their identification with gender and sexual norms and ideals. Queer of color analysis must examine how culture as a site of identification produces such odd bedfellows and how it – as the location of antagonisms—fosters unimagined alliances.”<sup>25</sup> I’m also interested in examining the “odd bedfellows” of the revolutionary nationalisms that are associated with postcolonial nation-building projects—particularly as they converge with postcolonial enlightenment discourses of intellectual liberation. The articulation of intellectual sovereignty against Euramerican supremacy is “seemingly antagonistic to liberalism;” however, my project claims that because Filipino intellectual culture articulates its normative attachments as a discourse of “not-disability” it thus profits from intraracial heterogeneities as they are hierarchized via proximity to gender, sexual, and racial normativities. Hence, the “unimagined alliance” I excavate is between postcolonial

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<sup>23</sup> Tadiar, 29 (2016).

<sup>24</sup> Ferguson, 3 (2003).

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

intellectual sovereignty and disability. For this reason, my dissertation furnishes close textual analysis of Hispanic American Philippine cultural production in order to explore how “culture” is articulated as a site of resistance *and* accommodation to US imperialism and the echoes of Spanish colonialism. Navigating a Hispanophone and Hispanic linguistic landscape captures how within culture multiple colonial histories intersect. Filipino intellectual culture then is a site of contest whereby the question of political sovereignty is fractured due to the multiplication of empire and the polyvocality afforded by Philippine Spanish. In historical and cultural situations in which masculinist sovereignty is uncertain, peripheral embodiments emerge to be managed or rehabilitated. The “crip native woman” emerges as a representational tactic that helps the Philippines national project navigate uncertain cultural terrain.

Because Filipino intellectual culture leverages its political promise for coherent subjectivity on the feminization of impairment, I suggest that we understand Filipino intellectual culture as itself a culture of disability. I further claim that it is difficult at best and ethically questionable at worst to consider the Filipino intellectual absent the parallel formation of and his articulation through the “crip native woman.” Where is the crip native woman? The crip native woman is what “neuro lit crit”<sup>26</sup> would call an “emotional prosthesis” or what disability theorists would call part of the ableist mechanism of “narrative prosthesis” whereby a figure is summoned to consolidate “normate”<sup>27</sup> embodiment and mental capacity.<sup>28</sup> The crip native woman allows postcolonial intellectuals in the Philippines to navigate two tumultuous terrains. The first is the polysemous linguistic, political, and social registers of multiple imperialisms. The fracturing of

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<sup>26</sup> Michelle Ty, “On the Cognitive Turn in Literary Studies,” *Qui Parle: Critical Humanities and Social Sciences*, 19.1 (2010): 205-219. Print.

<sup>27</sup> Rosemary Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

<sup>28</sup> Mitchel and Snyder (2000).

sovereignty under multiple sequential empires demands narrative cohesion especially around national identity. Consolidating the “racial national body” central to a stable national Filipino subject is the propagation of a discourse of “not disability” that is pivotal for many enlightenments of color.<sup>29</sup> The substrate upon which the capacities of this racial national body are articulated is the detritus of the national project: the crip native woman. She emerges as a perverse embodiment to be rehabilitated. At times, however, she is also a prosthetic device that is “too queer to rehabilitate.” This queerness is represented by the various discourses around sexual and gender non-normativities that connote disability as they pertain to the enlightened capacities emblematic of Philippine racial nationalism. A queer of color analysis aligned with disability critique enables a reading practice that I call “postcolonial cripistemology,” which reads post/colonial enlightenments within the intellectual paradoxes that subtend them. The second terrain pertains to this latter point. Post/colonial enlightenment in the Philippines articulates a racial national subject using discourses that are in logical contradiction. The first is, of course, the sovereign capacities that attach to the Euramerican<sup>30</sup> Enlightenment. In order to legitimate a national history outside of colonialism, the racial national intellectual must use Euramerican analytical tools to render the precolonial past usable for nationalist ends. As Fanon would later convey (and what we will see in Chapter 1), this serves as a countermeasure to the imminent falsification of “native past” that the national intellectual must articulate. However, because it is a marked racial past and a marked racial intellectual subjectivity that are being conjured by

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<sup>29</sup> Stuart Murray and Clare Barker, “Disabling Postcolonialism: Global Disability Cultures and Democratic Criticism,” *The Disability Studies Reader, Fourth Edition*, ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Routledge, 2013).

<sup>30</sup> I use the term “Euramerican” to highlight both the legacies of European Enlightenment that indubitably influenced the Propaganda Movement and the histories US colonialism that also influenced the latent capacities of the Philippine subject.



post/colonial enlightenment this is logically inconsistent with the “transparent” historically unmarked Sovereign Subject of the Enlightenment.

How can this contradiction persist? I suggest that the Philippine Enlightenment under US colonial rule and its later re-articulations in diasporic Philippine intellectual culture create intraracial Filipino difference through a concerted emphasis on gender and sexual difference. The perversities and deviations from the Philippine national subject that such gender/sexual difference connotes are deemed inassimilable to the historical project of racial nationalism that is propagated by Filipino intellectual cultures. Gender/sexual difference texturizes Filipino “raciality,” to borrow from Da Silva, through the securing of the intellectual capacities required to make such intraracial adjudications.<sup>31</sup> A corollary effect of such capacities is the articulation of disabled detritus subjected to such *ilustrado* intellectualism. The crip native woman is deployed as prosthesis to navigate the contradiction between Euramerican Enlightenment (as unmarked sovereign capacity) and post/colonial racial nationalism (as marked “native intellectual”).

I argue that the figure of the “crip native woman” is central to understanding the archival assembling of the Hispanic American Philippines. The Hispanic American Philippines is situated on the threshold and border between two imperial projects whose constituencies are myriad. This fractures the project of political sovereignty—its uncertainty and potential incoherence are intended effects of the colonial project. The prosthesis of disability emerges in this archive as the tactical feminization of colonial impairment such that Filipino intellectual cultures can maintain its epistemic authority *and* a stable racial nationalism. This figure of the crip native woman that I

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<sup>31</sup> Denise Ferreira Da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

study rhetorically and discursively in various flashpoints in Hispanic American Philippine history is a “palimpsest” upon which “nation” and “diaspora” are articulated as fields of “not disability.”

### *Filipino Studies*

I position this dissertation with the field-defining groundwork laid by scholars in the strategically named critical field of “Filipino Studies.”<sup>32</sup> Martin F. Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu recently rearticulated the commitments of this field in the anthology *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* (2016). Operating through the critical term of “palimpsest” means to cite the ways in which U.S. imperialism thrives on the omission of its colonial territories. The anthology aims to assemble “a collection of chapters that offer both critical commentaries on the state of Philippine Studies as well as innovative works that offer novel frameworks and alternative vantages for the study of the Philippines and its diaspora.” Over the “past fifteen years” “Philippine, Filipino, and Filipino American Studies have emerged...as a vibrant academic presence.”<sup>33</sup> *Filipino Studies*, indeed, similarly highlights a series of historical forms that this dissertation attempts to foreground. In a very self-reflexive and didactic move, the editors remark that many of the contributors to the collection “incidentally come from the Big Ten or the group of land-grant universities mostly in the American Midwest that hosted a wave of Filipino scholars in the early twentieth century called *pensionados*.” The *pensionados* are a part of the patrimony established in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by the *ilustrados*. However, their orientation

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<sup>32</sup> This is a “strategic naming” to differentiate and align “Filipino Studies” with “Philippine Studies” and “Filipino American Studies.”

<sup>33</sup> Martin Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu, “The Field: Dialogues, Visions, Tensions, and Aspirations,” *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora* (New York: NYU Press, 2016), 1.

necessarily differs, as they were sent by “the American colonial government to study in US universities and eventually assisted in the integration of the Philippines into American imperial rule as part of its tutelary project.”<sup>34</sup>

Remarking on the different geopolitical orientations of “Philippine Studies” and “Filipino American Studies,” the anthologizers attempt to theorize about this tension. Put simply, these areas of knowledge creation are on different sides of the international division of labor and this affects the aims, effects, and overall prestige/power of scholarly work. While the transpacific expansion, induced international migrations, and continued transnational interaction between Filipinos and Filipino Americans necessitate overlap and conversation, the editors encourage scholars that work in this field to consider “the problem of authority and authenticity—who speaks for whom—call[ing] to mind what Hau (2014) has termed ‘epistemic privilege,’ which points to the unequal and situated distribution of intellectual range and prominence, or to put it another way, the politics of intellectual location.”<sup>35</sup> I don’t seek to resolve these tensions in the space of this introduction. Nevertheless, I find the perhaps more inclusive rubric of “Filipino Studies” more accommodating than either Philippine or Filipino American Studies both of which, Manalansan and Espiritu note, have historically been defined, at least in part, by in-group and out-group politics. In short, I suggest that studies of the “Hispanic American Philippines,” as I have put it, belong in Filipino Studies.

The naming of this area of inquiry is meant to hold in tandem several overlapping critical genealogies that inform Filipino cultural critique and Philippine historiography. The first is the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 9. Manalansan and Espiritu are referring to Caroline Sy Hau, “Privileging Roots and Routes: Filipino Intellectuals and the Contest over Epistemic Power and Authority,” *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* 62.1 (2014) 29-65.

longstanding and important cultural-critical work of U.S. Empire Studies, which has taken up the Philippines as a foundational case study in understanding the transformation of the United States into a global colonial power.<sup>36</sup> The second, seemingly unrelated yet intimately tied to the latter intellectual genealogy, is the protraction of Hispanic modernity in the Philippines well into US colonial rule in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and its understudied influence on diasporic articulations of Filipino identity, culture, and literature globally. I say that the cultural force of Hispanism is “seemingly” unrelated simply because it receives inconsistent attention by Filipino American Studies. I theorize that the reason for the sidestepping of Spanish Empire in contemporary Filipino intellectual and identity formations is because Filipino American Studies’ orientation toward U.S. Empire Studies rhetorically forces U.S.-based Filipino critique to tackle the immediate *bête-noire* of U.S. imperialism. This obfuscates the continued role and presence of Spanish imperialism, Spanish language, and Hispanic culture in Filipino political formations. This is not to say that Spanish Empire is completely invisibilized. Filipino American scholars are too perceptive for such a blatant omission. For instance, Denise Cruz does stunning work elaborating the critical and cultural relevance of José Rizal’s feminine Filipina archetype “María Clara” on contemporary iterations of Filipina femininity. In her study, she is able to capture the ways in which Hispanic aesthetics of the nationalist literary period take up *mestizaje* to order and hierarchize Filipina embodiment via the categories of “*morena*,” “*mestizo*,” “*chinita*,” and, weirdly, “*dusky*.”<sup>37</sup> Other foundational scholars have certainly brought to the forefront how

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<sup>36</sup> Notable examples of this are the works of Amy Kaplan, *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2005) and the seminal Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1994).

<sup>37</sup> Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham: Duke UP, 2012). I will actually return to this María Clara-inspired vision of “*dusky*” in my third chapter. The Spanish terms for “*dusky*” are manifold shifting depending on history and context.

Spain and Hispanic Filipinos have adumbrated the very national project of the Philippines upon which, through which, and, at times, against which Filipino American Studies leverages its interventions. Scholars like Benedict Anderson, Vicente Rafael, and Reynaldo C. Ileto pioneered some path-breaking work in Filipino Studies as a distinct area studies venture and they remain part of the critical vocabulary of any Filipino scholar.<sup>38</sup> However, such attention is deemphasized, thus, I contend, and stand by this contention, that Spanish imperialism and the Spanish language as sustained objects and methods of analysis slip through the critical grasp of Filipino American Studies partially out of political necessity (U.S. empire appears more apparent and urgent) and, relatedly, because of regnant historical configurations of Philippine national history. What I mean by the latter is that Hispanic Philippine cultures are seen as part of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century period of “national consciousness” mentioned above (1872-1896). The turn to US Empire, an intellectual turn that was steered in no small part by Filipino American Studies, contributes to the solidification of what Rey Ileto calls the articulation of “purposive” monolithic historiography wherein Philippine history can be and is told through discrete segments whose overlaps are critically difficult to apprehend. While Ileto was speaking directly to configurations of Philippine nationalist historiography, I suggest that if we consider Filipino migration and diasporic formations within this rubric that Filipino American Studies also subscribes to the historical myopia that Ileto describes.<sup>39</sup> U.S. Empire is, in essence, the beginning of History and

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In Philippine Hispanic literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, we will observe, the term “trigueña” connotes the swarthy indigenous complexion of “dusky.”

<sup>38</sup> Anderson (2006), Anderson (2007), Ileto (2007), and Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000).

<sup>39</sup> Reynaldo C. Ileto, “Outlines of a Nonlinear Emplotment of Philippine History,” *The Politics of Culture Under the Shadow of Capital*, eds. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham: Duke UP, 1997), 98-131.

the ultimate telos of critique and method--the pivotal and monolithic dialectic that forecloses rigorous comparativity and multilingual research. This also contributes to the disarticulation of Ethnic Studies as a political formation from Area Studies, often characterized as a suspicious Cold War knowledge paradigm that, again, propagates American power/knowledge globally. Thus tidally located in a political historical moment of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Hispanic question of the Philippines is underemphasized due to the political convulsions of the Spanish-American and Philippine-American Wars.

While Filipino American Studies offers a crucial intervention into the erasure of empire in American cultural Studies, it has also enacted its own erasures in “forgetting” Spanish imperialism and the Hispanic Philippines. One example of this tendency is the edited anthology *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*. Angel Velasco Shaw and Luis H. Francia put together an impressive collection of stellar Filipino/American scholars, thus articulating and making more robust a field of inquiry that highlights the structural culture of compulsive omission that has historically mischaracterized the US’s foreign policy. Indeed, where Filipinos are concerned, our very displacement and racialization on the global stage was fundamentally given impetus by the United States’ “benevolent assimilation” of its “little brown brothers.” Scholars from the Philippines and Filipino America contribute stunning perspectives on the ways that the U.S.’s “forgotten war” is one (not the only) foundational touchstone wherein we can understand the United States’ expansion as an imperial one. That is, US acquisition of territories and peoples was not for the benefit of those territories or peoples. Rather, such acquisition contributed to the United States’ long-term plan to become *the* global superpower, displacing Europe by first displacing Spain.

I don't mean to suggest in this critique that Filipino scholarship should now switch from or deemphasize U.S. empire. Rather, Given the multiple imperial projects that have influenced the migrations, racializations, and colonizations of many Filipino groups, Filipino Studies as a formation is well poised to be on the forefront of comparative empire and comparative colonial studies. My hope is to push "Filipino Studies" more in this direction. For this reason, this dissertation draws on a multilingual archive that compares Filipino identity formations across Spanish and English. Philippinists and Filipino Americanists, for several reasons, are rarely specialists in the Spanish language. This is odd given that the Philippines' nationalist literatures, *the* intellectual and political nuclei through which revolutionary consciousness and the Philippine nation was historically "born," are, by and large, in Spanish. Even though there are methodological and linguistic realities that make sustained translinguistic work feasible, I suggest that Hispanic American cultural production from the Philippines can be a more expansive critical field whereby multiple imperial projects can be studied in tandem. Additionally, the critical work of "lo hispanoamericano" can also serve to demonstrate how contemporary diasporic Filipino cultural production does, indeed, cite Spanish archives.

For instance, in my second chapter, "Crippling the Philippine Enlightenment: The Ilustrado Meets the Native Disabled Girl," I offer a close reading of Filipino statesman Teodoro Kalaw's travelogue *Hacia la tierra del Zar* [Towards the Land of the Czar] (1908) published following the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and, by some accounts, during the Philippine insurrection whose Muslim and American belligerents were still fighting in Mindanao. Kalaw's text, however, narrates in Spanish a Filipino *ilustrado* subjectivity that is much more accommodating of American colonial rule. Through the prosthetic use of Chinese footbinding, Kalaw paints an Asia that is atavist and barbaric. Meanwhile, the Philippines becomes the

inheritor of a modern Asia reformed through the deformation he portrays through Orientalist tropes of Asian backwardness—a retarded development that is explicitly tied to colonial impairment. Kalaw’s work speaks to a much longer tradition of writing in Spanish under U.S. colonialism that, as I’ve established above, is rarely attended to by Filipino Studies. In my third chapter, I add to this archive of the Hispanic American Philippines a text that received Kalaw’s own literary patronage: little known Filipino author José Reyes’ *Novela de la vida real* (1930). Published with prefatory matter from Kalaw endorsing its “moral” and “healthy” exemplarity for the Philippines as it transitioned from colonial dependent to quasi-sovereign Commonwealth, Reyes’ novel uses social realist vignettes to alternately portray a Philippines in moral degradation and demonstrate how Spanish letters can be a diagnostic device to facilitate national rehabilitation. The figure at the center of this diagnosis is what I call the “Filipina Supercrip.” She is the unintuitive inheritor and maintainer of “*las letras Filipinas hispánicas*” whose saccharine and feminine poetry shows that Spanish is adequate to the task of norming Filipina gender and sexuality. Her raced “trigueña” [swarthy, brown, indigenous] body nativizes the colonial language to make *Novela* a work “de argumento local” [of local plot].

I extend this Hispanic American archive to demonstrate the ways in which Philippine Hispanicity maps onto more contemporary diasporic cultural production in my fourth and final chapter, “Femme Asias: Queer Enlightenments and Literary Historiography in *Ilustrado*: a novel.” In this chapter I analyze Miguel Syjuco’s novel in which the mestizo figure of the “*ilustrado*” sardonically stands in for the Philippine nation. While Syjuco’s literary parodic style is meant to critique the culture of elite entitlement that leads to the government corruption that the Philippines is often associated with, it is clear that his overall project is to globalize Philippine literature as haute cultural production through the exclusionary figure of the *ilustrado*.



Queer, trans-embodied, indigenous cultural workers can never access the space Syjuco maps out. Oddly, the Hispanic becomes more Filipino than the indigenous forms of queerness that Ilustrado (2010) finds contemptible. Syjuco's ambitious novel does, however, productively expand the question of the Hispanic Philippines to a much larger and more global borderlands than even the author himself might have surmised. Ilustrado ends in the Golden Age-inflected and fictional Philippine island "Dulcinea," articulating the Philippines within a Cervantian literary genealogy. Nevertheless, while the cartography and Miguel Syjuco's novel can be quixotically tied to Miguel Cervantes' Don Quixote, it still begs the question of the literal capacity to engage in the colonial language that is meant to be resignified. For this reason, I move the target of cultural analysis to the U.S.-Mexico borderlands through the vistas of Filipino American literature and Filipino American Studies.

There are two kinds of stakes for articulating the Hispanic American Philippines as a cultural and political postcolonial crip culture. The first are the political stakes of modern representation: who matters? How are they represented? Which figures, or bodies, or histories have to be erased such that certain figures can acquire authority and value? Related to this latter question is a second set of related stakes. The epistemic stakes of this project concern how disciplinary formations in Filipino Studies and Hispanic Studies, American and Ethnic Studies produce knowledge claims. Specifically, which languages are prioritized in the articulation of these claims? And, through which languages are certain figures made visible or obscured? Indeed, the study of Philippine geography is instructive here. From my vantage there is an archipelago of significations not tied to a singular landmass. Such significations are by their very nature diffuse – therein lies their comparative and multifaceted power to produce new and more ethical kinds of knowledge around our given analytical categories of race, gender, sexuality,

class, and dis/ability. The challenge for us as scholars is to find more holistic avenues of analysis that take not only transnational work seriously but also multilingual comparative work. My hope is that my modest contribution to the fields of Filipino Studies, Hispanic Studies, and Ethnic Studies will more broadly give impetus to further conversations around which archives we prioritize, how we come to find them, and what capacities are implied in their access or disavowal.

## CHAPTER I

### The Philippines to Fanon: National Crip Cultures

#### *Postcolonial Cripistemology and the Postcolonial supercrip*

In this chapter I will elaborate the theoretical apparatus of postcolonial cripistemology. Disability studies scholars Robert McRuer and Merri Lisa Johnson in their introduction to their special issue “Cripistemologies” “bind cripistemology” to Sedgwick's epistemology of the closet in order to understand disability within a neoliberal moment of crisis.<sup>1</sup> Generally, “cripistemology” is configured as a kind of “sitpoint theory,” drawing on and subtly critiquing the ableism of feminist “standpoint theory,” whereby the perspectives of disabled persons generate critical questions about the world and social reality that otherwise would not be entertained. They postulate “cripistemology” as an alternative way to produce knowledge about disability that critiques and opposes the way that political economy renders it a site of extraction of surplus value through the pharmaceutical industry and the medical industrial complex.<sup>2</sup> My engagement with cripistemology is not explicitly articulated to the “global psychopharmaceutical industry”

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<sup>1</sup> Merri Lisa Johnson and Robert McRuer, “Cripistemologies: Introduction,” *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 8.2 (2014) 127-147. Print.

<sup>2</sup> To launch this critique, McRuer and Johnson draw heavily from Jasbir Puar, “The Cost of Getting Better: Suicide, Sensation, Switchpoints.” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 18.1 (2011): 149-58. Print.

that renders impairments positively lucrative thus profiting from cultures of ableism that render disability negatively abject. Nevertheless, I am invested in the kinds of epistemological lines of questioning that Johnson and McRuer invite. What interests me more is that they coined “cripistemology” in order to articulate a generalizable dis-ease with how cultural theories of language (in queer studies, feminist, and poststructuralist studies) characterized the body solely as an effect of language. The epistemological problem with rendering the body as merely a rhetorical effect of a sign system is that it unduly privileges language as the arbiter of good politics—more embodied forms of knowledge are thus deemphasized. They thus align their cripistemological intervention with studies of race and transnationality. These scholars reason that critical theories on race, displacement, and globalization *alongside disability studies* have more potential to get at the body and embodied knowledge.

In “Disability Nationalism in Crip Times,” the introduction he penned with Johnson, McRuer cites a lecture in which he theorizes cripistemologies by foregrounding its engagement with transnational queer studies and critical ethnic studies. Other scholars have been inspired by the articulation of a transnational crip/queer theory, which is particularly evident in Jasbir Puar's own work (from which McRuer borrowed in his talk), and David Mitchell and Sharon Snyder's re-orientation of Puar's homonationalism to capture the able-bodiedness that inheres within the biopolitics of nationalism.<sup>3</sup> Because Puar's commitment to transnational feminist, queer of color theory, critical ethnic studies, and postcolonial studies has had such a powerful impact on such prominent thinkers in the field of disability studies, it seems logical and germane to extend “transnational crip theory” as a cripistemological examination of anti-colonial nationalism. From

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<sup>3</sup> David T. Mitchell with Sharon Snyder, *The Biopolitics of Disability: Neoliberalism, Ablenationalism, and Peripheral Embodiment* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).

a field-perspective this is where a framework of “postcolonial cripistemology” holds analytical promise. Contemporary crip theorists are rightly concerned with contemporary articulations of power/knowledge and political economy vis-à-vis bodily variation. Thus scholars like McRuer, Puar, and Johnson rightly draw on the “transnational turn” to invoke strategic analytical connections between crip theory, disability theory, ethnic studies, feminist and queer studies. I seek to add to this transnational expansion of crip analytics to consider earlier globalized antecedents to configurations of the modern body/mind.

Postcolonial cripistemology holds in the analytical forefront the logical inconsistency of the Euramerican sovereign Subject with the racial national subject--both of which are foundational for postcolonial national building. How does such a contradiction persist between a racialized national sovereign and the unmarked epistemic tools that such a sovereign uses to build a nation? Peripheral embodiment resolves this contradiction. This aporia is resolved because an impaired native subject, which I call the “crip native woman,” subsidizes the incapacities that inhere within the racial nationalist project of the Philippine Enlightenment. I will explore how this subjected native embodiment not only bears the brunt of colonial impairment but also is actually foundational in authenticating knowledge claims on behalf of the nation. Put another way, a “native subject,” or what Gayatri Spivak has called a “native informant,” is conjured by anti/postcolonial intellectuals to authenticate their claims on behalf of a racial national culture.<sup>4</sup> I argue that the racial nationalist claims made by “cultured individuals” resolves the contradiction of their parochialism through an appeal to nativeness as a sustained cultural object of analysis. Remember, such racial national maneuvers are by definition logically

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<sup>4</sup> Gayatri Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

inconsistent with the transparent universalism of the Enlightenment. By making these claims this chapter suggests that we extend disability critiques of the sovereign subject to an analysis of postcolonial nation building. In the Philippines, disability emerges as an index to organize emergent, shifting, and plastic *intra*racial hierarchies. These *intra*racial differences were horizontally articulated through gender and sexual norms. Racialized gender and sexual normativity emerged through a matrix of colonial disability wherein deviations from an ideal national subject were understood as pathological, cognitive and physical underdevelopment in order to historicize “postcolonial cognition.”

Historicizing “postcolonial cognition” requires an examination of how the political adjudication of the capacity for higher order thought becomes one of the principal mechanisms through which colonial relationships are structured hierarchically. Rather than focus on the purely neurological components of cognition that the term might elicit, I prioritize placing cognition within an historical context of overlapping colonialisms wherein politics and power relations determine not which claims to independent thought will be entertained but rather determine which bodies *actually have the capacity for complex thought*. The capacity for complex thought is not something that someone innately possesses. The assumption of cognitive complexity is a product of representation irrespective of actual ability. As such, my archive uses literature to hone in how representation affects the imagined relationships between bodies and their presumed capacities to think about and evaluate those relationships. I suggest that cognitive capacity is the result of the interaction between bodies rather than the innate mental characteristics of humans themselves; its recognition is embedded in social and political hierarchies. It is not what you think about and how you think about it; indeed, it is the social assignation of value upon what you think about and how you think about it. Social hierarchies of

power within a particular historical and geopolitical context determine what obtains as complex, higher order thinking vis-a-vis political structures such as the postcolonial nation-state.

“Complex thought” can mean the ability to make thoughts, hold them in one’s mind, and communicate them to another entity. What I mean more precisely, however, are those systematic chains of thoughts and thinking that exist in dialectical relationship to extant ideas around sovereignty, self-government, and nationhood. That is, one must be recognized as possessing the capacity of cognitive complexity in order to represent and coherentize a nation. Colonialism abrogates the recognition of the ability for such systematic thought thus nullifying the existence of national histories outside of Europe.<sup>5</sup> The nullification of cognition as a deeply felt human capacity transpires in the colonial aesthetic project of race. The articulation of a stable autonomous idea of the nation exists in dialectical relationship to other national projects from which recognition must be attained. Or, from which such nascent, debilitated, or hampered national entities attain recognition through colonial rehabilitation.<sup>6</sup> To analytically capture this dialectic of ability/disability within the fabric of postcolonial and imperial nation-building projects, I offer what I call “postcolonial cripistemology.”

The particular framing of “Filipino Intellectual Cultures” facilitates my own comparative ethnic studies and queer of color take on postcolonial disability studies. I offer the term “postcolonial cripistemology” as a way to revise our understandings of postcolonial nation-building projects more broadly within a globalized discourse of disability. Postcolonial cripistemology describes two interrelated discursive phenomena related to colonially-inscribed impairments. The first I’ve already laid out in terms of the polarity constituting Filipino

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<sup>5</sup> Franz Fanon, a theoretical foundation of this chapter, has argued this in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-148.

Intellectual Cultures and the projection of a pathologically inassimilable “crip native woman” that scaffolds the propagation of Filipino intellectual sovereignty. The second phenomenon describes the process through which a racial nationalism is deployed in the construction of the anticolonial and postcolonial nation-state

I posit the Philippine Enlightenment as the propagation of a discourse of postcolonial disability scaffolding claims to sovereignty. That is, the anticolonial imaginary of native capacity finds articulation under the duress of the colonial paradigms of epistemic violence. The anticolonial intellectual is he whose cognitive capacity is scientifically castrated by Euramerican Enlightenment paradigms of self-determination. Yet this intellectual also produces rigorous knowledge about his colonization, re-scripting the patterns of social control that mark colonial projects of racial uplift. It is the native intellectual’s practice of knowledge production that articulates a self-determining subject endowed with all of the political powers of sovereignty. Enlightenment is recast not through the transparent (ergo invisibilized) European (or, in the case of the Philippines, the Euramerican) subject but rather through a self-conscious nationalist discourse founded on a fabulated racialized masculinity that augurs postcolonial sovereignty. Indeed, it is a racialized nationalism and masculinism that endows what Frantz Fanon called the “cultured intellectual” with the rational powers of sovereignty. This differs from Euramerican framings of disability studies, which also critique Enlightened cognition. In these critiques, the Subject of Enlightenment is an invisibilized normed body that garners powers through the iteration of a disabled other. The intellectual capacity of the native, denuded by the colonial project, is re-established through the assertion of cognitive ability as partially a function of a racial and native embodiment; the able-mind and the native body are entwined in racial nationalist discourse.



In order to untangle such a constellation of discourses, I will read José Rizal's essay "Filipinas dentro de cien años" [The Philippines a Century's Hence"] alongside Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, to elaborate how both articulate a national culture via the matrix of "native history." I consider a series of operative questions by reading from Fanon to the Philippines. How does the Philippine Enlightenment articulate itself via a mind/body split? How does the Philippine Enlightenment articulate itself through an intellectual division of postcolonial cognition in which a racial national body endowed with superlative capacities can make claims as an *indigenous* subject? I argue that the *ilustrado* in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century propagates an invisible mestizo subject as the master of subjectivity who can speak on behalf of the "indio bravo" who is rendered an impaired subject that cannot speak for himself. The racial national subject, or *ilustrado* in this case, is the master of subjectivity who speaks for those native subjects that cannot speak for themselves yet informs the very authenticity of the claims made by the *ilustrado*. Indeed, it is such nativeness that authenticates the very claims to inarticulacy that engulfs the existence of the native subject! Using queer of color analysis, I establish revolutionary consciousness not only depends on Marxian derived understands of gendered divisions of labor as natural but also relies on divisions of cognition cleaving capacity from indigeneity. Yet indigeneity authenticates the very capacities required to materialize such divisions in the first place.

In the Philippines this transpires through the native use of Spanish as an enlightenment language and through the positioning of a native past rendered usable by the *ilustrado*. In other words, postcolonial and anticolonial enlightenment discourse (enlightenments of color) are discourses on "not-disability." Yet this "standpoint" also thrives on the technologies of incapacitation that contour anticolonial knowledge projects. One such technology that I center in

this analysis of postcolonial disability cultures is race. Enlightenments of color are structured as an insistence of cognitive capacity *like* the transparent rational “I” of Enlightenment but are also propagated as a particularized racial discourse that privileges authenticity, indigeneity, and an autochthonous native who signals the political rights of sovereignty to a geopolitical demarcated ancestral land. I suggest then that we read histories, national historiographies, racial nationalist intellectual hagiographies, and even the very articulation of anti/postcolonial thought as histories of the construction of postcolonial cognition. The first part of this chapter will align queer of color analysis more squarely within postcolonial disability. The section that follows will ponder connections between Fanon and Rizal who I will claim articulate themselves as what I call “postcolonial supercrips.” Following these analytical paths, I suggest vistas for “sitpoint theory,” as McRuer and Johnson have put it, that are articulated within racialized and gendered logics: “we cite [a] women of color/queer of color legacy here as a foundation of cripistemology, a new model and source for its attentiveness to bodies caught in new modes of exploitation...and its coalitional generation of new modes of creativity.”

### *Postcolonial Cripistemology as Queer-of-color analysis*

I consider both postcolonial theory’s and disability studies’ critiques of the European sovereign as the foundation of the fully human. Both fields have argued that the normative Subject’s ontology is negative; non-human or infrahuman subjects are parallel constructions establishing the primacy of Europe, and, in the case of the Philippines, also the United States as ideal forms of identification, embodiment, and political subjectivity.<sup>7</sup> Sociologist of race, Denise Ferreira da Silva has argued that “race” became a global project as a way to construct all

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<sup>7</sup> In addition to the authors cited in this chapter see the influential Susan Buck-Morss, *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

nonwhite humans as “affectable.” This means that as deficient humans they are by definition subjected to and subjugated by the rational powers of European Man. This makes “Man” “transparent” in her language. Homi Bhabha and Fanon have argued that in the colonial situation even when the colonized person of color attempts to mimic the modes of rational transparency that connote robust humanness that this mimesis fails. Mimicry resignifies the racial differences that justified colonialism in the first place. In the Philippines, “mimicry” and colonial mimesis are articulated in an imperial rhetoric of “benevolent assimilation” whereby US empire is understood as a project of racial uplift for the Filipino native.<sup>8</sup> Benevolence, I suggest, registers as a meaningful affect because of the regnant assumption that the colonized are not intellectually capable of governing themselves. Thus colonialism articulates itself as a discourse of disability in which the colonized other’s racialization is understood via cognitive impairment--the inability to be fully sovereign. Mimicry then emerges as a mode of rehabilitation--a colonial rehab that installs the Euramerican subject as an able-bodied and able-minded norm that the colonized subject desires to assimilate himself into.<sup>9</sup> However, it’s an assimilation that cannot “quite” obtain. The telos of rehabilitation is not to cure the deficiencies of the colonized. Rather, it is to establish the necessity for curation in the first place and to protract colonial impairment as a chronic condition.<sup>10</sup>

Similarly disclaiming the rehabilitative authority of scientism and colonial anthropology, postcolonial feminist Trinh T. Minh-ha describes race as a cognitive relation between colonial

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<sup>8</sup> Stuart Crieghton Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation: The American Conquest of the Philippines, 1899-1903* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).

<sup>9</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse,” *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2004).

<sup>10</sup> For more on the temporality of disability see the aforementioned Jasbir Puar’s “Prognosis Time” (2011).

observer and colonized observed. Power's inscription through language (the representation of colonial otherness) and study of the native other produces multiple binaries. There is a power/knowledge binary between those that are subjects of knowledge and those that are objects. There are also gendered binaries between the European-speaking subjects and the "inferior," "Non-European."<sup>11</sup> However, Minh-ha not only describes on the level of language and representation. She also theorizes such power asymmetries on the level of actual cognitive capacity and physical impairment. To wit, she writes: "The further I disentangle social anthropology, the deeper I entangle myself. Where is that ethnic me? The Other? The more I accept his word-prescriptions, the more my *competences* shrink... The goal pursued is the spread of hegemonic dis-ease."<sup>12</sup> She continues that "Natives must be taught in order to be anti-colonialist and de-westernized; they are, indeed, in this world of inequity, the *handicapped* who cannot represent themselves and have to either be represented or learn how to represent themselves."<sup>13</sup> Trinh actually elaborates the contradiction that I wish to center: "The Powerless have learned to parrot the language of the Powerful... the same logic compels the native to endure the enculturation process and resist acculturation. Caught in an unresolvable contradiction... they are entrapped in a circular dance where they always find themselves a pace behind the white saviors."<sup>14</sup> Writing from and through the politics of social location as is concordant with the interventions of much woman of color feminism, she postulates the "woman native other" as a foundational abject form of humanness objectified by the knowledge

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<sup>11</sup> Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman Native Other*, (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1989), 52-53, 140.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 52. My emphasis.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 58-59.

paradigms of Europe. She is locked in time and “ethnographically entrapped.”<sup>15</sup> She narrates the costs that such a subject pays for becoming fluent in the discourses that objectified her.

Interestingly, she frames the subjectivity and epistemic fluency of the “woman native other” through disability.

Race becomes a “handicap” for the colonized anthropologist.<sup>16</sup> Putting da Silva in conversation with Trinh is productive in answering why this is the case. The “modern problem of political representation” was shaped via, what Da Silva calls the “analytics of raciality” in which both European Enlightenment philosophy and its scientific imperial eventuality, colonial social anthropology, find articulation. This means that both “enlightened” discourses gained epistemic authority precisely through the hierarchization of racial difference whereby Reason as an objective universal human capacity obtained meaning and value. Trinh specifically, as well as theorists like Franz Fanon and Homi Bhabha more tangentially, explores what happens when the inhuman must accrete epistemic authority within the very epistemological protocols that categorically excluded her from the human in the first place. Before<sup>17</sup> the multicultural inclusion of different types of knowledge producers within the colonial disciplines transpired, racialized difference automatically connoted deficient cognitive reasoning.<sup>18</sup> In the era of multicultural inclusion that marks the ambivalence in which Trinh writes and which Da Silva foundationally rejects, racialized difference subtly highlights the extent to which nonwhite intellectuals,

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<sup>15</sup> Da Silva (2007).

<sup>16</sup> Trinh rehearses some of the central problematics that attach to colonial mimicry theorized first by Fanon and later by Bhabha.

<sup>17</sup> The “before” in this sentence is probably controversial. See Gabriella Gutiérrez y Muhs, *Presumed Incompetent: the Intersections of Race And Class for Women In Academia* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012)

<sup>18</sup> See *Transforming Anthropology*, “Race, Racism and the History of US Anthropology,” eds. Lee Baker and Thomas Patterson, Vol 5, No 1-2 (1994). Also Lee Baker, *From Savage to Negro: Anthropology and the Construction of Race, 1896-1954* (Berkeley: UC Press, 1998).

particularly women of color, must not only conform to epistemological conventions that historically oppressed them but also must work through the legacy of their “handicap.” The labor is on the Other to understand, unpack, and bare the ill-effects of colonial impairment. They are mimics that fail *precisely because* they are mimetic subjects.

The ways in which race and colonialism play a part in Da Silva, Trinh, Bhabha and Fanon’s work, offer new vistas for the way that embodiment is characterized in US based disability scholarship. While Trinh explores the power of language in the realm of anthropology, disability scholar Rosemarie Garland Thomson explores the representations of disability in literature. Garland Thomson theorizes a “normate” form of embodiment that is constructed through its opposition to impaired bodies.<sup>19</sup> Narrative, she argues, is one of the mechanisms through which readers and spectators can subconsciously identify with “normal” embodiment. Such normate identification is sublated partially because of the “extraordinary” spectacle and wonder of the disabled freakish body. The “woman native other” within the context of the ethnological discourses critiqued by Trinh is also projected within a scopic landscape wherein her body accrues meaning as an object of wonder, amazement, and, given her epistemic fluency in the sciences of Man, inspiration. Race is not only an abstract philosophical projection that secures autonomy for the Euramerican Man. It also exists in a fetishistic and scopic relationship to normal white able-minded embodiment partially carved out by the anthropological discourses so expertly disentangled in *Woman Native Other*. The colonial body--its femininity, its nativeness, and its otherness--is then also an “extraordinary body” whose fluency in Western epistemologies similarly inspires. The epistemic labors of this body represent a triumph over

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<sup>19</sup> Rosemarie Garland Thomson, *Extraordinary Bodies: Figuring Physical Disability in American Culture and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997).

colonialism in a sense. The extraordinary epistemological labors of the “woman native other” are yet absented from European and American ethical responsibility for the colonial projects through which anthropology obtained as a scientific discourse. This extraordinary body is what I call a “post/colonial supercrip.” She is an inspirational trope whose success disarticulates colonialism from moral adjudication. That is, insofar as she can perform epistemic labors within the confines of Western epistemology is demonstrative that Euramerican power/knowledge conventions are objectively good and rehabilitative in nature. Indeed, what Trinh is getting at is that Western Man is surprised and inspired that there is a mind there in the body of the woman native other. Yet the ways in which colonialism as a global project shaped such enlightenment cripistemologies rarely reaches a moral threshold of consideration according to Da Silva and Trinh.

Because the “woman native other” is articulated as a process of overcoming epistemic “handicap,” we can feasibly read her alongside another subjective triptych in crip theory, namely, Alison Kafer’s postulation of the *Feminist Queer Crip*. Kafer’s *Feminist Queer Crip* moves from imagined futures to more accessible ones. As a wheelchair user with “burn scars and gnarled hands” her “future is written on [her] body” or at least an ableist culture assumes it knows the life outcomes for such a body—they’re dismal. Kafer remarks how ableism endows normative people with a seemingly preternatural predictive power about the performance and resilience of disabled people wherein they either “imagine a future that is both banal and pathetic” or “their visions assume a future of relentless pain, isolation, and bitterness, a representation that leads them to bless me, pity me, or refuse to see me altogether.”<sup>20</sup> For able-

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<sup>20</sup> Alison Kafer, *Feminist Queer Crip* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2013), 1-2.

bodied folks seduced by ableist assumptions about what bodies should look like (normativity) and should be able to do, the future cannot be anything but bleak for a disabled person.

Impairment, rather than the ideology of ableism, is viewed as the obstacle to a good life.

What interests me is Kafer's take on disabled futurity and her subsequent intervention on articulating futures that are more accessible in her engagement with time and the body—what Puar theorizes as prognostic time.<sup>21</sup> I'm interested in facilitating a connection between “accessible crip futures” and the ways in which Trinh T. Minh-ha prompts a conversation on how the “woman native other” is anthropologically stuck in the past. Such an ethnological pastness as the baseline for the imagined capacities of the “woman native other” make it so that any action that she performs will be read as inspirational in similarly problematic ways that attach to the “supercrip”—the inspiration-inducing disabled subject that can pornographically perform at or exceeding their assumed capacities.<sup>22</sup> Literary theorist Sami Schalk has similarly demonstrated that the “supercrip” is not only a rhetorical technique that disengages corporeality from the inaccessibilities of social reality but this figure is also a mimetic subject whose performance of even mundane tasks is seen as an extraordinary triumph over adversity. The supercrip performs tasks that even normative bodies would not be able to like “climbing Mt. Everest” or overcoming racist colonialism to succeed in the metropole. The problem with these representations is that their purpose is not to show the resilience of disabled persons per se. Rather it is to locate the labor of overcoming impairment in the individual rather than the social structures that make those impairments difficult to manage. In the same way that colonial

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<sup>21</sup> Jasbir Puar, “Prognosis Time: Towards a Geopolitics of Affect, Debility, and Capacity” *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 19.2 (2009): 161-72. Print.

<sup>22</sup> Sami Schalk, “Reevaluating the Supercrip,” *Journal of Literary and Cultural Disability Studies* 10.1 (2016) 71-86.



histories are obviated for the “woman native other,” the built environment as inherently inaccessible is ignored.

The particular embodiment of disabled persons, no matter their real or latent capacities, cannot conceivably access the “good life.” The robust life and political subjectivity of such goodness would, indeed, be imperiled if it could adequately be accessed by bodies that are *not* “good” or “robust.” The future is not democratic. Futures animated by democracy, political sovereignty, corporeal wholeness, and self-determination are foreclosed to bodies that present unreconcilable alterity to dominant conceptions of normalcy. For Kafer, the crippled body bound to a wheelchair--an ungenerous representation evacuated of agency--“is conceptualized as a terrible unending tragedy [such that] any future that includes disability can only be a future to avoid.”<sup>23</sup> Such ableist logic shares an unmistakable and undeniable genealogy with eugenics wherein folks can casually “make claims about who should and shouldn’t inhabit the world.”<sup>24</sup>

I certainly support the crip intervention of discussing what kinds of futurities we are invested in as a human collective even though the cynical part of me balks at simplistic gestures to collectivity, human or otherwise. Nevertheless, for my purposes I ask that such interventions into the question of more accessible futures take into account a broader framework that also includes the colonial past. This is important because we must also consider the geopolitical context in which such political moves to democratize the future are entertained. These democratic claims are made within national collectivities wherein conceptions of the “future” obtain as public and political good. It’s safe to assume that Kafer is not necessarily or explicitly articulating her crip critique in a postnational or borderless world. Indeed, I do not think that it

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<sup>23</sup> Kafer (2013), 2.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 3.

would be prudent for disability studies or activism to consolidate its agenda in such a world. I ask, though, how do the obliterated colonial pasts of such national collectivities shape the political claims to accessibility and democratic futurity articulated in crip theory? How should the forgotten histories of imperialism which shape the very national projects critiqued or reformed by crip theory be considered alongside the maligned embodiments of disability history? What are the limitations to political claims to accessible futures that do not engage the colonial past? Is a crip theory that ignores the colonial past only ever reformist in orientation rather than radical?

The “past” is the operative word in my line of questioning. Kafer’s productive critiques unravel the misguided assumptions that we either 1) all desire the same kinds of futures all of the time or 2) that disabled bodies appear in front of the ableist gaze as being impaired by their past. This second point is crucial albeit underemphasized in Kafer’s analysis. We can infer that it is not just ableism that disables bodies but also the exclusionary futures that read an impaired body in the present as perpetually spoilt by a disabling past. That is, the ruination of the body (configured normatively) cannot access the political promise of the future because of some tragic misfortune that befell the disabled in their past. They are meant to answer for that past--consumed by it and subsumed into a perverse impaired temporality that they must overcome. The disabled body is enveloped by the impariments of a pastness from which it cannot disarticulate. What if this distilled crip temporal reading could serve to communicate across colonial time and space? Is not the “woman native other” similarly subsumed by a colonial pastness which serves as a “handicap” that she cannot escape? A pastness that temporally conditions her work as an overcoming of the nativeness upon which and through which she theorizes? For Trinh it is precisely the overcoming of these handicaps that substantiates her

existence as an inspiration that proves the rehabilitative power of Euramerican knowledge paradigms.

The question of a “native past” is the temporal landscape that can serve as a productive conversation between postcolonial criticism, queer of color theory, and crip theory. Trinh’s version of woman of color feminism critiques the way that European Man installs himself as the telos of development. The dialectic between colonial difference and European colonization produces a field of potential and immanent critique that conditions the possibility for the emergence of a “woman native other” like Trinh that can productively challenge the weak inclusion of colonized subjects into their power/knowledge frameworks without questioning the asymmetrical power relations that structure those frameworks. The mindful and conscientious inheritor of woman of color feminist thought is often postulated as queer-of-color analysis. Less explored are queer-of-color critique’s self-conscious connections to postcolonial studies.

Postcolonial and queer of color critique share a concern with the material distribution of resources and embodied forms of violence that normative Westernized epistemologies tend to evacuate. In this spirit, queer of color analysis attempts to give us new intellectual tools to understand “culture” as a site of regulation and resistance. National cultures in the United States and the Philippines have historically been established through a series of “estrangements” from “respectability, domesticity, heterosexuality, normativity, nationality, universality, and progress.”<sup>25</sup> Such estrangements attempt to manage the social heterogeneities that cleave domestic populations through internal and external migrations, shifting political economy, and changes in policy. Coherence of culture is desired over the unboundedness of heterogeneity such that “to make sense of that culture as the site of gender and sexual formations that have

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<sup>25</sup> Ferguson (2003), 2.

historically deviated from national ideals, we must situate that culture within the genealogy of liberal capitalist economic and social formations.” Ferguson’s immanent critique of supposedly radical Marxism’s exclusion of and management of nonnormative difference (and thus its unexpected though unsurprising alignment with liberal bourgeois respectability) re-reads extant theorizations of liberalism, political economy, and statecraft to demonstrate that not only the heteronormativity of race but also to demonstrate how race as a formation is foundational in the regulative norming of gender, sexual, and class difference within plural cultural formations. Ferguson adds: “these are trends that are manifest themselves globally, linking terrains separated by time and space.”<sup>26</sup> Using the figure of the black drag-queen prostitute Ferguson assembles a novel mode of interpretation known as queer of color analysis whose “decisive intervention...is that racist practice articulates itself generally as gender and sexual regulation, and that gender and sexual differences variegate racial formations...[and that] this articulation, moreover, accounts for the social formations that compose liberal capitalism.”<sup>27</sup> “Culture” becomes an operational analytic in queer of color analysis “as it fosters both identifications and antagonisms” and is thus “a site of material struggle.”

A pivotal moment in which Roderick Ferguson demonstrates the ways that queer-of-color analysis is a form of immanent critique is his disidentification with historical materialism. Indeed, the dialectic between black queerness and radical Marxism is what differentiates the intersectional criticism of woman of color feminism from queer-of-color criticism. It is precisely the identification of the ways in which revolutionary social theory aligns with bourgeois respectability that demonstrates that the revolutionary utopic future of Marxian criticism is not

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 3.

for everyone. The future is not democratic. Queer of color theory is a parallel formation to woman of color feminism but one that installs itself in a self-conscious dialectical relation with Western social theory in particular. It is, nevertheless, queer of color critique's engagement with and disidentification from inflections of colonial anthropology that *also* demonstrates that it is participating in a global network of postcolonial thought. To wit, Ferguson argues that "Marx universalized heteropatriarchy as he theorized property ownership."<sup>28</sup> Ferguson makes the stunning observation that "he bases the origins of property ownership within the tribe." He quotes from *The German Ideology*:

The first form of ownership is tribal...ownership...The division of labor is at the stage still very elementary and is confined to a further extension of the *natural* division of labour existing in the family. The social structure is, therefore, limited to an extension of the family; patriarchal family chieftains, below them the members of the tribe, finally slaves.<sup>29</sup>

Ferguson provides an accurate yet *incredibly* condensed analysis of how the racial category of "tribe" "illustrates the ways in which racial discourses recruited gender and sexual difference to establish racial identity and essence."<sup>30</sup> Certainly, reading Ferguson in conversation with woman of color feminist critiques of colonial anthropology like Trinh T. Minh-ha illustrates how deep and historically dense the colonial relationship between the scientific category of race and bourgeois gender and sexual norms that *Aberrations* critiques.

The tribe serves as a colonial symbol naturalizing divisions of labor via gender. The division of labor that we observe in political economy is a "natural" extension of the family

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., as qtd in Ferguson, 6.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 6-7.

structure. The heteronormativity of the family structure is buttressed by colonialism's appraisal of the primordial signifier of the "tribal" unit thus substantiating and adumbrating all other forms of ownership. The tribe then becomes an "essential" characteristic that upholds the bourgeois nuclearity of the family whose troping recruits colonial race to manage non-normative sexual and gender formations. Ferguson writes that "Marx imagined social relations and agency—or as he says, "appropriation" and "activity"—through heteropatriarchy and racial difference simultaneously."<sup>31</sup> Ferguson further establishes Marx's "revolutionary" alliance with bourgeois respectability and nuclearity quoting his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts* in which he declares the "direct, natural, and necessary relation of person to person is the relation of man to woman," which for him is a "natural species relationship."<sup>32</sup> This earlier version of Marxian heteronormativity is later reinscribed, as Ferguson establishes, within a global colonial relationality wherein the "naturalness" of heterosexuality subsists on a primordial essence extracted from European colonialism. Given this context of the heteromasculinization of global economy (if we read Marx's critique of political economy within a global colonial scene, as we indeed, should) then it should not surprise us that the "woman native other" would find her "competences" shrink at the task of resignifying herself vis-à-vis the burden, or "handicap," of this native past.

Ferguson similarly writes against the primordial indigenous smokescreen that infuses Marxian thought with an ineffable coloniality by critiquing how Marx uses the figure of the "prostitute" as proving "capital's defilement of man." Man's relation to commodification in particular "produces man as a mentally and physically dehumanized being, deforming agency

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>32</sup> As qtd in Ferguson (2003) 7.

and distorting subjectivity.” The symbol *par excellence* of this “mentally and physically” “deformed agency” is the prostitute whose own body is the site of commodification and thus deserving of our contempt. Ferguson repositions feminist critique of the gender stability and sexual normativity that the prostitute threatens within histories of race. Holding up the Hottentot Venus, “who was exhibited in freak shows through London...links the figure of the prostitute to the alleged sexual savagery of black women and to install nonwhite sexuality as the axis upon which various notions of womanhood turned.”<sup>33</sup> Because of the enfreakment and wonderment that the Hottentot Venus inspired, she has also been a central case study in disability studies’ critique of normate embodiment.<sup>34</sup> Given that it is European colonialism’s dehumanization of blackness that serves as the mechanism through which heteropatriarchy becomes universalized in revolutionary social theory, Ferguson privileges the “black drag-queen prostitute” in queer-of-color critique’s unraveling of the normativities of capital relations: “Understanding the drag-queen prostitute” he writes, “means that we must locate her within a *national culture* that disavows the configuration of her own racial, gender, class, and sexual particularity and a mode of production that fosters her own formation.”<sup>35</sup> It is at this moment, that I re-orient queer of color analysis to postcolonial critique in order to locate the detritus of revolutionary theory within anti-colonial “national culture.” The different sites of “national culture” explored by both anticolonial national theorists José Rizal and Fanon, I suggest, place all the threads explored above into a cohesive conversation in which the “handicaps” of “native history” can transnationalize disability studies.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>34</sup> See Garland Thomson (1997).

<sup>35</sup> Ferguson, 11. My emphasis.

*Fanon and the Filipino Supercrip: On National Crip Culture*

José Rizal reflects on the Spanish colonial past lamenting that “las Filipinas se despoblaron, empobrecieron y atrasaron, sorprendidas en su metamorfosis, sin confianza ya en su pasado, sin fe aun en su presente” [the Philippine depopulated, became impoverished and backwards, surprised in her metamorphosis, without confidence in her past, without faith even in her present].<sup>36</sup> Such epistemological lacunae given impetus by Spanish backwardsness sets the stage for the articulation of a new kind of cultural politics. One that Fanon would later call more programmatically “national culture.” Fanon defines “national culture” in *The Wretched of the Earth* as “the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the action through which the people has created itself and keeps itself in existence. A national culture in under-developed countries should therefore take its place at the very heart of the struggle for freedom which these countries are carrying on.”<sup>37</sup> First, we must certainly have in the analytical forefront that Fanon was articulating an Africa-centric yet planetary conception of black political consciousness to make sense of anti-colonial rebellion. His is a theory written during armed anti-colonial struggle. Second, I want to highlight that in this definition of “national culture,” thought obtains in an historico-political context rather than as an abstracted and apolitical human capacity for cognition. This is significant given Fanon’s training in psychoanalysis. In the context of armed struggle for Algerian independence from French colonial rule two mutually constitutive perspectives emerge in Fanon’s critique of national culture. The first is popular martial struggle for independence from French colonialism—the literal re-acquisition of Algerian lands and claiming of French colonial outposts. The second is that of the

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<sup>36</sup> José Rizal (1889), 4.

<sup>37</sup> Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2005), 44.



“native intellectual”—an amalgam of scholastic and political “cultured individuals” dedicated to the construction of an autonomous “national culture.” “National culture” in this latter formulation is meant to serve as a corrective to the epistemological nullification of sovereign black history by Eurocentric bias. Rizal writes similarly around the intellectual autonomy of “cultured individuals” that craft a textual canon as the bulwark for a Filipino political consciousness; however, it is a consciousness that is articulated through palpable cultural and historical deficits caused by colonialism:

Comenzó entonces una nueva era para los Filipinos. Perdieron poco á poco sus antiguas tradiciones, sus recuerdos; olvidaron su escritura, sus cantos, sus poesías, sus leyes, para aprenderse de memoria otras doctrinas, que no comprendían, otra moral, otra estética, diferentes de las inspiradas á su raza por el clima y por su manera de sentir. Entonces rebajóse, degradándose ante sus mismos ojos, avergonzóse de lo que era suyo y nacional, para admirar y alabar cuanto extraño é incomprendible; abatióse su espíritu y se doblegó.

[A new era began for the Filipinos. They lost little by little their ancient traditions, their memories; they forgot their writing, their songs, their poetry, their laws, in order to memorize (learn by memory) other doctrines, that they didn't understand, another moral framework, another aesthetic, different from the ones inspired by their race—distinct in their climate and their affect. Thus he debased himself, degraded before his very own eyes, he felt shame of what was once his and national, in order to admire and praise the exotic and the incomprehensible; his spirit deflated, he was vanquished.]<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Rizal, 4. The tense shifts in this part of Rizal's articulation of “national culture” are really very interesting. The reader will probably notice that the first sentence refers to the third person plural

Rizal anticipated and theorized similar epistemological nullifications of “national culture” that Fanon would later theorize around sovereign blackness. We see the rejection of the “exotic” (read: Spanish) thus implying a prescriptive embrace of the “native.” Nevertheless, such an embrace must contend with what Rizal called the cultural loss of “ancient traditions” historically falsified by European colonialism. Because this nullification clusters, according to Fanon, around assumptions about the ability of native, and in his case, specifically black people to have and construct national histories, I suggest we can think cripistemologically about the “debasement” and the “wretchedness” that the Algerian revolution and the anticlericism of Rizal are meant to resolve. Nevertheless, Fanon is far more suspicious than Rizal.

Fanon is very skeptical of the objectives of the “native intellectual” despite his interventions. While he agrees that it is vital to recuperate archives of black histories, which were systematically erased or mis-read by European colonialists, Fanon believes that this should not be the only goal. He expresses that there are dangers to articulating a national culture solely as the product of and in response to European falsification of national claims. Is a postcolonial national culture only defined by its reactivity to European colonial rule? Fanon says yes and no. In short, Fanon argues that native intellectuals should not retreat into abstract folkloristics. Rather, national intellectualism should also always be a part of national liberationist struggles for independence. Armed struggle, indeed, *is a part of national culture*. Fanon’s argument continues

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(los Filipinos). However, he shifts to demonstrate the reflexive damage (thus expressed with the antique third person singular reflexive compound—“*avergonzóse*” versus the modern “*se avergonzó*”—to describe a singular entity’s “shame,” “debasement,” “deflation” and misinformed obsession with the “exotic.” I translated this to refer to a singular “he.” However, this could also feasibly refer to the “pueblo Filipino” or the Filipino nation. Perhaps there is no difference between the two.

to be influential in many strands of postcolonial studies and resonant in many postcolonial nation-building projects. For my purposes, I center his materialist critique of the “native intellectual’s” penchant for abstraction as part of a psycho-affective reorientation of native cognition. We cannot forget that Fanon launches these critiques of history through a commitment to yet disidentification from psychoanalytic diagnosis. Fanon apprehends the articulation of black continental culture and native intellectualism through a rehabilitative ethos; an ethos that does the work of historicizing global histories of postcolonial cognition. First I locate the moments of anticolonial rehab that contour Fanon’s uplift of the wretched of the earth; with respect to this, he writes:

Inside the political parties, and most often in offshoots from these cultured individuals of the colonized race make their appearance. For these individuals, the demand for a national culture and the affirmation of the existence of such a culture represent a special battle-field. While the politicians situate their action in actual present-day events, *men of culture take their stand in the field of history*. Confronted with the native intellectual who decides to make an aggressive response to the colonialist theory of pre-colonial barbarism, colonialism will react only slightly, and still less because the ideas developed by the young colonized intelligentsia are widely professed by specialists in the mother country. It is in fact a commonplace to state that for several decades large numbers of research workers have, in the main, *rehabilitated the African, Mexican and Peruvian civilizations*. The passion with which native intellectuals defend the existence of their national culture may be a source of amazement; but those who condemn this exaggerated passion are strangely apt to *forget that their own psyche and their own selves are*

*conveniently sheltered behind a French or German culture* which has given full proof of its existence and which is uncontested.<sup>39</sup>

Here Fanon attempts to carve out a "special battle-field" for nationalist intellectualism. He differentiates national intellectual culture from politics as usual. Fanon argues that the "cultured individuals of the colonized race" have a special duty to make historical claims "rehabilitating" the civilizations of the Third World — Africa, México, and Perú. He juxtaposes this "specialty" of historical knowledge production from politicians that "situate their action in actual present-day events" because the latter do not concern themselves with the ways that their very own national project, its culture, its history, its civilization still continued to be rendered illegitimate by "colonialist theor[ies] of pre-colonial barbarism." For those that are not invested in the rehabilitative ethos of national intellectual culture Fanon launches a psychoanalytic critique—he pathologizes them. He argues that critics of the national project of history have psyches and subjectivities that are "conveniently sheltered behind a French or German culture which has given full proof of its existence and which is uncontested."<sup>40</sup> However, Fanon is making a claim that the very process through which native intellectuals make their critiques is defective, adumbrated by French and German culture. These critiques cannot create original thoughts outside of the psychic structures of colonialism- they cannot think on their own. Here "native intellectualism" is a rehabilitation for the psyche, a rehabilitation that many scholars would call decolonization. Because Fanon is speaking within a psychoanalytical framework and adopts a diagnostic voice it's reasonable to speak of the articulation of sovereign native intellectual cultures within the domain of postcolonial disability since his rhetorical advances for nationhood

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 36. My emphasis

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 36.

are indeed rehabilitative in nature. The uncovering, preservation, and delineation of a "national history" developed by the "young colonized intelligentsia" in order to rehabilitate native civilization provides a space to re-orient the very psychic structures through which the complex ordered chain of thought we would call the "nation" can materialize. To wit, he claims there is "nothing to be ashamed of in the past, but rather dignity, glory and solemnity. The claim to a national culture in the past does not only *rehabilitate* that nation and serve as a justification for the hope of a future national culture." He continues that "in the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native...[however] the efforts of the native to rehabilitate himself and to escape from the claws of colonialism are logically inscribed from the same point of view as that of colonialism."<sup>41</sup>

Rizal, while not a psychoanalyst, certainly makes the case for understanding Filipino intellectual culture by paying more attention to medicalized knowledge, as his training in medicine in Madrid would indicate. There is canonical precedent for this reading of Rizal in Philippine Studies. Rey Iletto implores us to not disentangle Rizal the propagandist from "Rizal the physician." He writes that while Rizal is considered a nationalist intellectual that "the other Rizal is a medical practitioner who devoted much scholarly investigation to the natural sciences." Indeed, Rizal was not alone amongst the *ilustrados*. He formed part of a group of "medical practitioners who also wrote *histories*" of the Philippine nation thus suggesting "the discursive complicity of the medico scientific outlook in the *ilustrado* construction of Philippine history."<sup>42</sup> Rizal, in this regard, also remarked, like Fanon, on the emergence of cultured individuals:

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 37-38.

<sup>42</sup> Reynaldo C. Iletto, "Outlines of a Nonlinear Emplotment of Philippine History," *The Politics of Culture Under the Shadow of Capital*, eds. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd (Durham: Duke UP, 1997), 98-131. His subsection "Physicians and the State" is particularly evocative.

Hoy existe un factor que no había antes; se ha despertado el espíritu de la nación, y una misma desgracia y un mismo rebajamiento han unido á todos los habitates de las Islas. Se cuenta con una numerosa clase ilustrada dentro y fuera del Archipiélago, clase creada y aumentada cada vez más y más por las torpezas de ciertos gobernantes, obligando á los habitants á expatriarse, á ilustrarse en el extranjero...Esta clase, cuyo número aumenta progresivamente, está en comunicación constant con el resto de las Islas, y si hoy no forma más que *el cerebro del país*, dentro de algunos años formará todo su sistema nervioso y manifestará su existencia en todos sus actos.<sup>43</sup>

[Today there exists a factor that did not exist before: the spirit of the nation has been awakened, and the same misfortune, the same abasement has united all the inhabitants. Now factor in a numerous enlightened class [clase ilustrada] within and outside the Archipelago, a class created and propelled to grow in ever greater numbers by the bungling efforts of certain governors, who force [the country's] inhabitants to expatriate, to educate/enlighten themselves [ilustrarse] in foreign lands...this class, whose number grows continually, is in constant communication with the rest of the Islands, and if today it forms no more than *the country's cerebrum*, in a few years it will form [the country's] entire nervous system and will manifest the country's existence in all its actions.]<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Rizal, 18.

<sup>44</sup> As qtd and translated in John D. Blanco's "Oriental Enlightenment and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?" *Filipino Studies: Palimpsests of Nation and Diaspora*, eds. Martin Manalansan and Augusto Espiritu (New York: NYU Press, 2016) 56-83. I use Blanco's translation instead of using my own because of the fascinating turn of phrase that he uses in translating "cerebro del país." I would have probably elected to use Resil Mojares' translation of "brains of the nation" or "the country" but the *ilustrado* class as the Philippines' "cerebrum" is

Using the contexts of Rizalian *Ilustración* [Enlightenment] and Fanonian *Négritude* [Blackness], we can think through an undertheorized contradiction that should be of interest to transnational and historically grounded understandings of disability: what do you call the simultaneous and parallel existence of colonial debilitating discourses about native capacity for autonomous self-government, on the one hand, and, the anticolonial emergence of intellectual cultures fluent in modern discourses of liberal egalitarianism, on the other? Reflection on the contradiction that a Fanonian-Rizalian theoretical crossroads portends the anticolonial and postcolonial “cerebrum” is a fruitful cripistemological intervention. Postcolonial cripistemology as a crip and queer of color analytic captures the ways in which gender and sexuality are deployed in representation to infuse the process of making sense of race via colonial disability. Postcolonial cripistemology reads disability in two ways. The first captures the historico-discursive understanding of the protracted colonial debility that informs the very formation of enlightenment cultures in the Philippines. I suggest that colonial debility influences intellectual cultures in the Philippines as these cultures are always already subalternized to Spanish and American imperial projects. Second, Filipinos are at once colonial-disabled natives incapable of self-government *and* colonially capable bureaucrats worthy of racial uplift. The intersection between colonial-disabled native and semi-autonomous *ilustrado* is one I want to hone in on. Blanco’s worthy translational work suggests that *ilustrados* mutated Orientalist discourse for their own ends; they reshaped modernity affirm an unexpected sovereign subjectivity using European models of modern political rationality and self-determination. While I do not disagree, I think that placing Rizal in conversation with anti-colonial black struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century is a much needed anachronistic

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much more evocative. Blanco’s rhetorical construction of this anatomical translation aligns interestingly with the *ilustrado* “medico scientific outlook” that Ileto observes.

move. Unfortunately, what becomes clarified as Fanon and Rizal intersect is that the postcolonial sovereign's "cerebrum" animates and becomes animated by a discursive and geopolitically pervasive anti-blackness.

Placing Fanon in conversation with Rizal reveals the anti-blackness that structures Philippine Enlightenment thought. Rizal published his essay "within a historical moment that constructed the black body as the antithesis of rationality and universality of Western epistemology."<sup>45</sup> Again, Rizal is ambivalently and objectively pondering what may transpire for the Philippines were it to remain a Spanish colony with more sovereign power and representation or a completely independent country. Regarding the question of whether the Filipino nation should worry about sustaining its sovereignty were it to detach from Spain, Rizal writes:

Si las Filipinas consiguen su independenciam al cabo de luchas heroicas y tenaces, pueden estar seguras de que ni Inglaterra, ni Alemania, ni Francia, y menos Holanda, se atreverán á recoger lo que España no ha [sic] podido conservar. El África, dentro de algunos años, absorberá por complete la atención de los europeos, y no hay nación de los europeos, y no hay nación sensata que por ganar un puñado de islas aguerridas y pobres, descuide los inmensos territorios que le brinda el Continente Negro, vírgenes, no explotados y pocos defendidos. Inglaterra tiene ya bastantes colonias en el Oriente y no se va á exponer á perder el equilibrio; no va á sacrificar su imperio de la India por el pobre Archipiélago Filipino.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Ferguson, 22.

<sup>46</sup> Rizal, 48.



[If the Philippines acquires its independence after tenacious and heroic battles, you can rest assured that neither England, Germany, France, nor Holland, will risk recovering what Spain will have not been able to keep. Africa, within a few years, will completely absorb the attention of the Europeans, and there is neither a European nation nor a sensible one that would relinquish the defenseless unexploited virgin territories of the Black Continent for a handful of war-torn and destitute islands. England already has several colonies in the Orient and won't open itself up to a loss of control; it won't sacrifice its empire in India for the poor Philippine Archipelago.]<sup>47</sup>

What does blackness have to do with Filipino racial nationalism? Blackness is productive signifier in the intraracial dynamics between Philippine indigeneity and Filipino illustration. The usability of the Philippine native past for the future projection and maintenance of sovereign power is constructed through the unfree black body. In articulating a postcolonial supercrip space of critique, I show that it is also aberrations in blackness that condition aberrations in Filipinoness as a racial national project. For this reason, I think across colonial time and space to place Fanon in conversation with Rizal to demonstrate the estrangements that construct both of these postcolonial supercrip theorists. Aberrations in Filipino compose a color line that historically corresponds to material divisions within the distribution of resources and comparative colonialism.<sup>48</sup> This color line articulates intraracial differences between Filipinos

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<sup>47</sup> Rizal's argument makes a possible exception for the United States: "acaso la gran República Americana, cuyos intereses se encuentran en el Pacífico y que no tiene participación en los despojos del África, piense un día en posesiones ultramarinas" (Rizal 48). [perhaps the great American Republic, whose interests lie in the Pacific and aren't participating in the spoiling of Africa, may one day plan to acquire overseas possessions]

<sup>48</sup> Benedict Anderson, "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines: Origins and Dreams," *New Left Review*. 16.9: 3-31.

that historically inhere class divisions within nativizing bureaucracies under US colonial rule.<sup>49</sup> Such articulations of Filipino racial particularities, an indigenous racial past, and precolonial histories have depended upon the construction of a nativist archive.<sup>50</sup> We could say that this archive is the first articulation of a field of work that we could aptly call “Filipino Studies” wherein the conception of a national identity relied on the rendering of the precolonial indigenous past “usable.”

Of course, the late 19<sup>th</sup> century European partitioning of Africa to which Rizal undoubtedly refers, has its roots in the transatlantic slave trade. Recent scholarship articulating race and disability has also reconsidered the ways that histories of black enslavement inform the contemporary frameworks through which we come to understand dis/ability. Nirmala Erevelles similarly strives for a “materialist disability studies.” Within my framing of postcolonial criptistemology such analyses allow me to elaborate a materialist analysis of anti/postcolonial enlightenment. This means reading the ways that identity (in this case “national culture” or “native history”) indexes asymmetries in global political economy. Erevelles writes that a materialist disability framework should gesture toward “historical conditions of possibility that [do] not reproduce economic exploitation on a global scale.”<sup>51</sup>

Arguing in the same materialist vein as McRuer, Johnson, Lowe, Ferguson, and Tadiar, Erevelles observes: “the human body is one of the most fetishized commodities in late-capitalist

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<sup>49</sup> Kramer (2006); Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.)

<sup>50</sup> Megan Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anticolonial Imagination* (New York: Verso Press, 2007).

<sup>51</sup> Erevelles, 29.

societies.”<sup>52</sup> Such configurations of the body-as-commodity are relatively recent. Pre-Enlightenment religious conceptions of the body viewed it as weak and sinful—something that required ascetic discipline. However, “with the advent of Enlightenment beliefs in universal, inalienable, equal rights, a more secular humanistic conceptualization of the body developed.”<sup>53</sup> In a similar argumentative move as Denise da Silva, Erevelles notes the scientific notion of “race” emerged to explain the prevailing inequalities of the time. That is, colonial regimes of power, European imperial expansion, and chattel slavery logically contradicted and were more widespread than the proliferation of secular humanist beliefs in inalienable universal rights. “The secular objective gaze of science” and its primary analytic of race scrutinized “the physiological body in attempts to resolve [the] contradictions” of liberal humanism.

Erevelles critiques social and critical theories of difference for mystifying how disability has historically been central to establishing a “European, bourgeois, heterosexual, healthy, male body as the normative standard against which to compare ‘other’ bodies.”<sup>54</sup> In essence, she posits a theory that will locate the body and its impairments in theories of social difference, which have fallen short because disability has not been robustly theorized. Nevertheless, drawing on Iris Marion Young, she cautions that “the body as lived is always layered with social and historical meaning—and is not some primitive matter prior to an understanding of economic and political and cultural meanings.”<sup>55</sup> Erevelles urges us to find the black disabled body with a reconsideration of the intellectual legacies of Hortense Spillers.

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>55</sup> As quoted in Erevelles (2013), 37. Original citation is Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: “Throwing Like a Girl” and Other Essays* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 7.

She engages Spillers' canonical essay "Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe" which has crucially helped to elaborate the origins of African American subjectivity in the transatlantic slave trade. Spillers' analysis of the colonial violence, dehumanization, and the biopolitical embrace of the black enslaved body into explicit realms of calculation (the most hyper of hyperextraction of surplus value) has given a more nuanced historical context for the pathologies that attach to contemporary blackness. Erevelles argues that Spillers' essay "is as much about disability as it is about race" because the imperial architectures of racialized violence historically have produced black disabled bodies in a literal sense. Additionally, such literal and epistemic violence has figuratively articulated blackness itself as a pathological disability to be avoided, rehabilitated, or destroyed.

Rizal similar participates in the "continental condemnation" of white culture over the "whole of the African continent" as that which needs to be cured in Fanon's psycho-anticolonial rehab. What I mean by "psycho-anticolonial" is that the very articulation of anticolonial politics cannot transpire without understanding the ways that colonial rule affected the black psyche. This is an important observation as it corroborates that in order to coheretize a stable national culture the psychic well-being of the native or the colonized must be considered. But there is a problem with this. Fanon argues that the curative process by which the native would rehabilitate himself of colonialism is circumscribed by an aporia. He writes that "the efforts of the native to rehabilitate himself ... are logically inscribed from the same point of view as that of colonialism."<sup>56</sup> Writing in the context of the construction of national culture, Fanon argues that the formation of national epistemology apart from that of colonial powers is "[I]n the sphere of psycho-affective equilibrium it is responsible for an important change in the native." What

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 38.

interests me here is that he gives the reader a black cognitive profile in which black politics globally are articulated via a cognitive dissonance. Perhaps he inflates the translatability of such a profile but for studies of race and disability within the strictures of colonialism Fanon's theorization of anti-colonial cognition has global implications in its suggestion that the very biological and neurological mechanism of constructing thoughts about social reality is, indeed, racialized. I believe that Fanon invites a discussion of the ways that blackness aestheticizes cognitive capacity.

Fanon invites a comparative disability theory of anticolonial politics. Although his *Condamnés de la terre* is writing specifically with regards to African national cultures he contends that “such an examination is not specifically national.” For European colonial rulers, black “savages” were neither “Angolan nor Nigerian;” rather, Europe conceived and “simply spoke of the ‘Negro’.”<sup>57</sup> For Fanon, “Colonialism’s condemnation was continental in scope” and hence the urgency of a continental articulation of “la Négritude” which could speak across blackness in various cultural, national, and political contexts was politically vital. The “cultured individuals” of black nationalisms, according to Fanon, had a particularly important role in writing against the colonial supposition of black inferiority. The corrective was re-writing the epistemological biases that have precluded the capacities of black peoples to have autonomous histories outside of the purview of Eurocentrism. It is the corroboration of intellectual capacity to make coherent claims about history that helps to facilitate *la Négritude* as a transcontinental intellectual movement against the presumed cognitive deficiencies that attach to blackness. By centering intellectual cultures within the “colonial situation,” highlights the connection between scientific racism, psychoanalysis, and the cognitive deficiencies that colonially attach to black

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 38.

peoples. In this regard, he remarks that “[e]very effort is made to bring the colonized person to admit the inferiority of his culture which has been transformed into instinctive patterns of behaviour, to recognize the unreality of his ‘nation’, and, in the last extreme, the confused and imperfect character of his own biological structure” .<sup>58</sup> The “imperfect character” of the colonized’s “biological structure” is a persistent imposition that inhibits the robust articulation of nationhood. Such imperfection of biology cannot be divorced from the political meanings and possibilities of blackness. Fanon’s language describing the pathologization of blackness bears striking symmetry to extant critiques of what is termed the “medical model” of disability. Here we can observe a connection between the ways that interventionist medical science norms bodies into an ideal type of able-body and the ways that colonialist scientific racism pathologizes blackness “as an individual defect lodged in the person, a defect that must be cured or eliminated if the person is to achieve full capacity as a human being.”<sup>59</sup> We can understand Fanon’s postcolonial critique as resonant with disability critique as Tobin Siebers avers that “Disability studies does not treat disease or disability, hoping to cure or avoid them; it studies the social meanings, symbols, and stigmas attached to disability identity and asks how they relate to enforced systems of exclusion and oppression, attacking the widespread belief that having an able body and mind determines whether one is a quality human being.”<sup>60</sup> Furnishing his readers with this observation of the scientific racism that inheres within a discussion of black nationalist intellectual cultures, Fanon invites a conversation between the colonial aesthetics of race and disability aesthetics. Regarding the body in cultural theory:

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>59</sup> Tobin Siebers, *Disability Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2008), 3.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

There is no body... *Disability Theory* echoes recent calls... to take the mimetic powers of embodiment seriously. Disabled bodies provide a particularly strong example of embodiment as mimesis because they resist standard ideas about the body and push back when confronted by language that would try to misrepresent their realism. Second, theorists influenced by the linguistic turn infrequently extend the theory of representation from mimesis properly speaking to political representation. This lack of flexibility has made it difficult to critique ideology within mimetic theory, to push discourse theory in the direction of a broader consideration of the real as a domain in which words and things exist in relations of verifiable reciprocity, and to account for social and political representation beyond narrow ideas of social constructionism. A focus on the disabled body encourages a more generous theory of representation that reaches from gestures and emotions to language and political representation. It also opens the possibility of classifying identity as an embodied representational category, thereby inserting the body into debates about identity politics.<sup>61</sup>

Fanon does something similar where he attempts to wrest “native intellectuals” from the realm of historical representation into the realm of armed political conflict and activism. Political representation becomes about phenomenological blackness — a real body, whose material reality of being black under colonial rule is adumbrated by a particular kind of imagined cognitive ability. In essence, I attempt to connect the “cognitive” turn in disability aesthetics to consider the “normate” as part and parcel of global histories of the coloniality of power.<sup>62</sup> Blackness —

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>62</sup> Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y América Latina,” *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales* (Buenos Aires: Centro Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales, 2000).

and by extension other racial projects like *mestizaje* — is not only a scopic racial aesthetic but also connotes a colonial cognitive hierarchy; a cognitive aesthetic that inheres within racial projects foundational to a mode of postcolonial nation-building that anchors itself in monolithic conceptualizations of the national body.

The Philippines allows me to infuse these connections with important observations regarding the management of gender and sexuality via racial nationalism within the framework of colonial disability. Fanon in particular shows a penchant for paternalism whereby the Pan-African reach of blackness as political project does not account consistently for the subalternizing rhetoric diminishing black women within articulations of “national culture.” Such tactics are also common in Philippine intellectual nationalism wherein the benevolent hand of the United States has historically adumbrated the masculinist itineraries of the Filipino *ilustrado*. Historiographically, Filipinos have used the debilitating discourse of benevolence to their advantage. As we will see in the following chapter, I demonstrate the ways in which US imperial benevolence was navigated by Teodoro Kalaw to articulate the Philippine Enlightenment as the steward of a modern intellectually robust Asia. Such an articulation depended on the excellence of Japanese imperialism in Taiwan, on the one hand, and the fetishization of the “savage” gendered impairment of Chinese footbinding, on the other.

Prioritizing the study of Philippine literature in Spanish perhaps inevitably broaches discourses of cultural authenticity. Fanon gives precedent for this wherein the struggle to articulate a native history must weigh its priorities and political commitments within the context of armed anticolonial struggle. He argues that those intellectuals that silo themselves “using the techniques and language which are borrowed from the stranger in his country” will soon submit



themselves to the othering project of exoticism; they shall become foreigners in their own land. It is colonialism; however, that sets up the cultural, political, and linguistic burdens of proof whereby 'nationals' must adjudicate who is part of the in-group and who's a traitor. Certainly, given the political necessities of the Algerian revolution against France, Fanon's argument makes logical sense. Nevertheless, he does express these concerns in French. I state this not to contradict Fanon but to uphold the complex ambivalence the he himself describes as being inherent to the negotiation of the colonized with their own colonization. Specifically, I am skeptical of the ways that Kalaw and other *ilustrados* like José Reyes (discussed in Chapter 3) attempt to localize a colonial language. Yet, I am excited for the potential subversions that are possible by communicating in the space of Hispanic modernity under US rule. Nevertheless, simply arguing for the legitimacy of cultural claims may not achieve the end of expelling the colonizer from stolen lands as the former may rely on an imagined goodwill non-existent in colonialism.

It has been argued in Philippine historiography that the coloniality of power was inscribed in local national politics within the Philippines-what Paul Kramer has called "imperial indigenisms."<sup>63</sup> Such arguments by him and several others have indexed the ways that a simple bi-directional understanding of colonial power relations between the United States and the Philippines risks casting a monolithic net over local kinds of Filipino differences. The "cultural individuals" of "national intellectual culture," or the "brains of the nation," are those hacendado-elite mestizo Filipinos who were in a position to manipulate the new hierarchies of American colonial power much in their favor. They could access the material and political resources by which colonial bureaucracies were nativized. Ironically, the mechanism through which such

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<sup>63</sup> Kramer (2006).

"imperial indigenisms" were organized was precisely through the alignment of indigeneity with cognitive deficiency. Such differences in the cognitive ability of sovereignty and Philippine indigeneity played out in Philippine-US relations. For instance, cultural and ethnographic displays of the St Louis World's Fair allowed for an identification with US imperialism by American citizens by strategically placing native Filipino bodies in ethnological dioramas. Displaying savage bodies and life customs for a US consumptive gaze facilitated two interrelated aspects of American imperial rule of the Philippines. The first is the presentation of savagery as antithetical to political sovereignty and self-determination. The second related to the first is the construction of imperialism as benevolent. The interrelated discourses of indigenous savagery and imperial benevolence relies on a hierarchical understanding of the cognitive abilities required to be a self-determining and autonomous political subject. This reframes extant understandings of historical concatenations of benevolent assimilation within a disability framework of postcolonialism. In this framing we can understand benevolent assimilation as invested in the construction of an autonomous white body that possesses the universal powers of reason and the cognitive authority to think big thoughts. Additionally, we can observe the apposite construction of a savage brown body who is not capable of the higher order thoughts of required for autonomous democratic rule. Imperialism as a form of authoritarian dispossession from the colonized of the political right to a self-determining future (a future populated and navigated by one's own thoughts) is justified through a colonizing discourse on the impairments of savagery.

## Chapter II The Ilustrado Meets the Native Disabled Girl

### *Crippling the Philippine Enlightenment*

What might it mean to speak of colonialism as systematic mass disablement? In this chapter, I use debility/capacity somewhat interchangeably with the more common disability/ability in order to engage other histories not often addressed under the rubric of disability critique.<sup>1</sup> Doing so allows me to prioritize other global contexts that don't "count" as disability in the phenomenological sense.<sup>2</sup> I translate these concepts to the realms of postcolonial criticism and Spanish language writing from the Philippines under US occupation. I am particularly interested in the ways in which disability critiques of self-determining autonomy--the constellation of political, affective, and social attitudes that have shaped our ideas of normal embodiment and mental ability--can be rearticulated with the historical preponderance of colonial projects that have routinely found political justification based on the presumptive mental inferiority of the colonized.

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<sup>1</sup> Jasbir Puar expands the terms "ability" and "disability" with the illuminating "capacity" and "debility" (2012). As a result, other historical dimensions of difference can be articulated to rhetorics and histories of ableism. For instance, histories of scientific racism are predicated on the proximity of cognitive impairment and the racial science of eugenics even though one's color does not connote mental disability in a phenomenological sense. However, the historical proximity of blackness and mental retardation can be captured more readily by talking about race/racism as a debility vis-à-vis an able-bodied, white norm endowed with unquestioned and, as we will see, infinite cognitive capacity.

<sup>2</sup> Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

“Disabling postcolonialism,” a foundational move made by postcolonial disability theorists, urges postcolonial criticism to reframe colonialism as a systematic imposition of mass disablement through the technologies of economic exploitation, metroimperial governance, and enduring racialized notions of cognitive and physical ability.<sup>3</sup> Disability theories have scarcely considered histories of imperialism wherein the physical and cognitive capacity for autonomous self-government was denied to the colonized. Neither has postcolonial theory adequately addressed ability/disability as guiding instantiations of coloniality. Indeed, “proving” the colonial subject’s physical and cognitive incapacity lies at the heart of the colonial project. While initial forays into postcolonial disability critique mainly focus on physical impairment, I also extend such figurations to elaborate the discursive connections between mental in/capacity and colonial race relations. Philippine and Filipino American historiography have examined this “cognitive tension” in the critiques of U.S. colonialism as a project of “benevolent assimilation.”<sup>4</sup> U.S. empire benevolently rehabilitated the Philippine native into the mores of the civilized world, thus aligning whiteness with robust cognitive capacity and the Philippine native with an enduring cognitive underdevelopment. Such a reframing of U.S./Philippine colonial relations demonstrates, I argue, how the Philippines is one site wherein theories of race and postcoloniality can be reconciled with crip theory. Therefore, my site of intervention lies in a postcolonial understanding of ability/disability through the frame of the Philippine postcolonial nation-building project that hagiographically has been called the “Philippine Enlightenment,”

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<sup>3</sup> Clare Barker and Stuart Murray, “Disabling Postcolonialism: Global Disability Cultures and Democratic Criticism,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 61-73.

<sup>4</sup> Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2000); Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006).

which I explain more fully below. For now, think of the Philippine Enlightenment as a historical securing of male autonomy through a long conversation across time *between men*. The homosociality of postcolonial enlightenment, perhaps surprisingly, inspires my turn to crip theory.

Crip theory has sought to connect discourses of able-bodiedness as an unspoken norm to those of compulsory heterosexuality.<sup>5</sup> In similar moves connecting race and disability, histories around the scientization of homosexuality as pathology can be understood in tandem with those of disability. According to Alison Kafer, “disability studies and crip theory differ in orientation and aim: crip theory is more contestatory than disability studies” as it seeks to critique the modes of reformist state recognition upon which disability activism has relied.<sup>6</sup> To “crip” a text or period of history cannot be reduced to “finding the cripple” or disabled body. Much the same can be said for “queering” a text.<sup>7</sup> Crip/queer are modes of reading that are not invested exclusively or even at all in locating subjects that would confess to queerness or disability *per se*. Rather, both are about locating regimes of regulation that discipline bodies, rendering that regulation obvious, and, finally, destabilizing it for more just political ends and a more ethical distribution of resources. Crip theory’s importance in understanding Philippine intellectual histories cannot be overstated.

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<sup>5</sup> Robert McRuer, *Crip Theory: Cultural Signs of Queerness and Disability* (New York: NYU Press, 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Alison Kafer, *Feminist Queer Crip* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> That is, queer theory is not invested in excavating sociological subjects that would confess to the “truth” of being LGBT as much as it is invested in critiques of normativity. Crip theory shares this political orientation: to critique the regulatory structures that discipline bodies rather than finding positivist accounts of disability.

I argue that under the orchestration of imperial benevolence of U.S. occupation, the colonial debilities that routinely attached to the Filipino male body were sublimated to an Asian female body symbolically and literally disabled by the practice of footbinding--a reformation of the Philippine Enlightenment through the symbolic deformation of Chinese Woman. This is where the homosociality of enlightenment enters as an instructive analytic. I reinterpret the homosocial conversation "between men"<sup>8</sup> canonically chronicled in queer theory to understand how postcolonial autonomy for Filipino intellectuals materializes through the conduit of a disabled Asian female body engulfed by the particularity and savagery of her "pies aprisionados," or bound feet.<sup>9</sup>

Because of the atavist stasis that footbinding comes to represent in Philippine enlightened re-significations of Asia, I privilege the often-studied colonial genre of travel literature--writing predicated on the literal physical capacity to travel and the cognitive capacity to represent what is apprehended by what Mary Louise Pratt calls, the "imperial eye/I."<sup>10</sup> I align postcolonial critique with crip theory to advance a "postcolonial crip critique." That is, I align postcolonial criticism that has thematized the enlightened Subject at the center of travel/touristic narration with crip theory's formidable critiques of the constellation of assumptions around the mental and physical capacities that serve as the underlying yet often unspoken mode of production for the rational powers of the Subject that travels to distant lands.

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<sup>8</sup> Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985).

<sup>9</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908).

<sup>10</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

*The Philippine Enlightenment: an international division of cognitive capacities*

A late nineteenth-century movement of Filipino intellectuals, historically remembered as the “Propagandist Movement” by some historians or the “Philippine Enlightenment” by others, is seen as producing the textual nucleus through which a Filipino national identity is forged against Spanish oppressors.<sup>11</sup> Periodicals like the nationally famed (in Spain and the Philippines) *La Solidaridad* saw some of the most famous intellectual luminaries, or *ilustrados*, of Filipino history produce work reflecting on the irony of a mentally liberated Filipino subject agitating during the historical epoch of late Spanish colonialism and its backwards, superstitious Catholicism.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the most iconic examples of mental emancipation through liberal

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<sup>11</sup> The citation of this intellectual movement as a “Philippine Enlightenment” can be found in Resil B. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation*. (Manila: Ateneo de Manila Press, 2006). For an analysis of the Propagandist Movement, I prefer Raquel Reyes, *Love, Passion and Patriotism: Sexuality and the Philippine Propaganda Movement, 1882-1892*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008). However, one can also find illuminating and canonical critiques of the “Propagandists” in Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006).

<sup>12</sup> “Ilustrado,” translated from Spanish, means “enlightened,” “illustrated,” even “erudite.” The noun and adjective always refer to a masculine subject. I have never seen “ilustrada” in written work on the Philippine Enlightenment. Various scholars have produced work on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Hispano-Philippine liberal Propagandist Movement with most tracing their lineage to Benedict Anderson. You might recall Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of Nationalism* (1983), particularly his fourth chapter “Creole Pioneers.” Indeed the works of ardent Philippine nationalist José Rizal are of some note in articulating his arguments about how print capitalism stitches together the extant and diffuse elements and constituencies of national consciousness. You might also regard *Under Three Flags: Anarchism and the Anticolonial Imagination* (2005) to be a more thorough engagement of the subject of Filipino anticolonial nationalism. The latter work was inspired in no small part by his student Megan Thomas. Her recent book *Orientalists, Propagandists, and Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism* (2012) tracks the scholastic achievements of Filipino patriots in the social sciences. In the Philippines, one would be remiss to forget about Resil B. Mojares’ biographical and aptly titled *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (2008). Mojares is one of the few that directly calls this late 19<sup>th</sup> century scholastic period a “Philippine Enlightenment.” For a fascinating and canonical counternarrative to the “production of modern knowledge” from a liberal European albeit anti-colonial framework, one must read Reynaldo C. Ileto’s (also a student of Anderson)

republican ideology are *pambansang bayani* (national hero) José Rizal's novels *Noli Me Tangere* (1887) and *El Filibusterismo* (1891), which literarily rendered the *ilustrado* anti-clerical critique of Spain thus giving Filipinos the anticolonial language with which to find freedom from the Spanish crown's ecclesiastical empire.

When Filipino Hispanic cultural production is studied it is almost invariably arrested in a late nineteenth-century moment whose intellectual center of gravity is the *Propagandistas* or the literary acumen of Rizal. I locate this arrested development more squarely in Filipino American Studies critiques of American imperialism. The anticolonial break from Spain historically and historiographically facilitates a critique of U.S. Empire. A secondary epistemological effect, however, is the ignorance of a large body of work produced by Filipinos throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While there are certainly exceptions to this historical fetishization of the late Spanish colonial period to get at the more immediate *bête noire* of U.S. empire, it is not widely known that Filipino *ilustrados* were writing *in Spanish* well into the 1950s during American imperial rule and subsequent Japanese occupation. I shift the conversation to theorize the historical constructions of Filipino cognitive and intellectual ability during the 20<sup>th</sup> century by highlighting one of the more prolific cultural producers during American colonial rule: the “Father” of Filipino libraries, Teodoro Kalaw. I situate the Filipino Enlightenment to which Kalaw is indebted and a part, however, within what Nirmala Erevelles theorizes as a transnational feminist and materialist disability studies framework. She writes a “theory of the flesh,” borrowing from Hortense Spillers, “to formulate...a ‘materialist disability studies’ that draws on historical

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*Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (1979), which understands the re-appropriation of Catholic religious symbols in peasant revolts in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century Philippines as a welcomed subalternist historiography that reads against the grain of Filipino Enlightenment thought.



materialism to theorize how disability exists in dialectical relationship to race, gender and sexuality.”<sup>13</sup> Transnational capitalism and the imperialisms through which it thrives are the materialist contexts in which disability gains meaning in two distinct but related ways: (1) the imperial war machines that actually cause physical and mental impairments and (2) the racist, sexist, homophobic political landscape in which the value of “disability” as a social construction comes to organize those impairments in hierarchical relations as they are innervated by race, gender, sexuality, and class. Erevelles’ model is exceedingly helpful in understanding the gendered (but also a priori raced) mind-body split that organizes Filipino intellectual patrimony. And because it is the space of postcolonial intellectualism that I analyze, the focus on “cognition” is not accidental. While physical disability and the ways in which the material body is marked will be deeply considered in this analysis, I take up disability theory as part of a more sustained effort to address the historical and epistemological assumptions embedded in a not-so-often avowed biological “truth” about the postcolonial intellectual: *his* cognition and the national imaginary that cognition ‘re/produces.’

Indeed, the masculine possessive is not accidental, demonstrating that the cognitive ability to make grand claims on behalf of the nation is attained by a “he.” Rather than a biological fact and sedimented assumption about the ability of human males to generate knowledge about their colonization, cognition has a historical valence mediated by trans/nationalist, always already racialized and sexualized, gender politics. Furthermore, Filipino intellectual work must always be situated, especially in the frame of a critique of American imperialism, within the networks of transnational capitalism that circumscribe via complex processes of racialization and sexualization the articulation of the Filipino nation state and those

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<sup>13</sup> Erevelles, 21.

bodies that make claims about its existence and its sovereignty. Kalaw was writing in the historical transition from one colonial epoch to another – the Philippines that resides between Spain and the United States. This periodization, what has been called the “Age of Kalaw,” provides one historical materialist context within which we can read the cascading divisions of labor that organize which bodies are cognitively capable of being the intellectual stewards of the nation and which bodies are affectively *too* embodied to have access to the sovereign tools of Enlightenment. Essentially this analysis asks which subjects can cognitively transcend the limitations of the colonized body and thus leave behind the “disability” of colonial violence? Furthermore, how do deformation and debility function as nodes through which affective labor is consigned and surplus value extracted?

Kalaw’s bibliography is enormous, with dozens of monographs, collections of essays, and speeches to choose from in which such divisions of labor play themselves out. In this chapter, I privilege Kalaw’s epic 300- page travelogue *Hacia la tierra del Zar* (1908), written during the beginning of his political career, which coincides with the shift to U.S. imperialism. There, Kalaw assiduously details his travels alongside Manuel Quezon as a representative of the First Philippine Assembly throughout Asia, Europe, North Africa, and, of course, “towards the land of the Czar” – Russia. Accompanying them is the ever-watchful eye of the U.S. imperial apparatus that sponsors the trip embodied by their Russian language interpreter, Theo Rogers. I view this travelogue as a racial materialist travel narrative of the economic transformations in and around Asia during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Such materialist considerations serve as the underlying mode of production of the gendered and international division of labor as it comes to affect the Philippines’ entrance into networks of transnational capital. They also index the *ilustrado*’s cognitive ability to represent a new Filipino Enlightenment through the medium of

Spanish. I suggest that Kalaw's travel writing is a mapping of cartographic materialism insofar as it maps the movements of transnational capitalism through Asia coeval with the movement of the *ilustrado* himself – grand tours enabled by their author's cognitive ability. Privileging *Zar* also allows an engagement with the genre of travel narrative. The travel narrative has been theorized as a space where intellectuals have gained access to the sovereign tools of Enlightenment. This access is predicated on disembodiment – what Mary Louise Pratt has called the “erasure of the human from nature.”<sup>14</sup> In this formulation of travel writing, the “totalizing project lives *in* the text, orchestrated by the infinitely expansive mind and soul of the speaker.” The spectrally infinite cognitive capacity of the “imperial I/eye” is abstracted from both the material landscape it purports to document and the materialist conditions that precipitate travel in the first place.<sup>15</sup> Such re/presentation actually produces desire for the objects observed by the “I/eye.” That is, this colonial genre is a materialist cartography opening up entry points for the penetration of capital through the representations of bodies, vast material wealth, and natural resources. A fissure transpires between the “objective” observer and the objects of analysis that he appraises and represents. Nature and the colonial landscape seem to unfold naturally, apolitically, and amorally before the scientific eye of the imperial traveler. The travel narrative in Kalaw's case allows space for the “postcolonial” Filipino *ilustrado* to access the transparent status of sovereign subject. Such transparency, however, is mediated by a U.S. colonial gaze by virtue of the American absent presence throughout *Zar* and the political support offered by American colonial embassies during this Filipino grand tour of Asia.

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<sup>14</sup> Pratt, 109-140.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 122-123.

The centralization of the body and embodiment is crucial in this analysis. What Kalaw's *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* allows is a reexamination of the genre of the travel narrative through a postcolonial disability optic. The "erasure of the human from nature" evokes the mind/body split necessary for the masculinist discourse of Enlightenment to materialize. Indeed, "materialize" is the keyword here. The *ilustrado's* erasure from the "Asia" that he represents is the very departure point for his emergence as sovereign agent. The departures and arrivals re-presented in *Zar* – the literal and figurative border crossing between different Asias – narrate the mind/body split through a division of labor evocative of the movement of global capital also represented by Kalaw. That is, the Enlightened gesture to transcend the body is mediated by and mediates the global diffusion of capital that extracts surplus value from human labor. What I mean by this is that the very invitation to travel as an agent of enlightenment or empire is given impetus by shifts in global capitalism. Specifically, I refer to the US's implicit interest in economic and political transformations in Asia. This interest is mediated through the propagation and the consolidation of a Philippine political elite. The question of the restructuring of epistemology in the "Philippine Enlightenment" during the early twentieth-century is not disentangled from economic restructurings occurring in Asia writ large. If the Philippine Enlightenment protracts through a homosocial continuum of *ilustrados* navigating American imperialism's investment in Asia then Filipino homosociality concretizes through and as a globalizing discourse of disability. The literal ability of *ilustrados* to cross borders across multiple empires is enabled by an epistemic sovereignty in which the travel narrative is situated as a colonial medium of representation. However, the cognitive capacity that this ineluctably implies is a product of transnational capital and racialized gendered divisions of labor. The physical embodiment of the *ilustrado*, with the bourgeois capitalist capacity to move across borders as colonial observer, is

made transparent or “erased from nature” through the physical over-embodiment of the Asian female body. The peculiar example that Kalaw centralizes is the social practice of footbinding – a “Chinese Woman” evacuated of interiority whose deformed body epitomizes a disabled “Asia,” immobile, literally bound, and figuratively stuck in time. I thus argue that the epistemic fissure of cognition from embodiment is the very mechanism that enacts an international division of labor whereby global capital penetrates Asia.

But before the estrangements enacted upon and through the “Chinese Woman” as symbol of an Asia in decline can properly orient a postcolonial disability reading of the *ilustrado* as cognitive figure, I establish *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* as protracting Philippine Enlightenment through a homosocial continuum between a Filipino nation and an American Empire. It is through this continuum that we can understand this Filipino travel narrative as a racial materialist survey of the economic developments in and around Asia at the turn of the twentieth century – an Asia both reformed and deformed by the Philippines as a colonial satellite and sovereign national project.

*“Las tristezas de la patria”: the “new” ilustrado’s Asia*

Teodoro Manguiat Kalaw (1884-1940) was one of an emergent class of new Filipino intellectuals who came of age in the years just following the Philippine wars for independence, otherwise known as the Spanish-American (1898) and Philippine-American Wars (1899-1902). Kalaw represents a “new” Filipino intellectual, or *ilustrado*, in the sense that his prolific work proceeds from and is epistemologically indebted to late 19<sup>th</sup> century anticolonial writings produced through the Europe-based Filipino “Propagandist Movement.” Scholars in Philippine historiography like Benedict Anderson, Megan Thomas, John Blanco, Raquel Reyes, Paul

Kramer, Resil B. Mojares, Reynaldo C. Ileto, and Gloria Cano have assiduously detailed a late 19<sup>th</sup> century movement of Filipino intellectualism that produced a textual canon through which the Filipino nation became “enlightened.”<sup>16</sup> However, Kalaw’s historical positioning vis-à-vis such intellectual canonicity brings us irrevocably into an American-occupied Philippines rather than the historical emphasis of Spanish colonialism to which such work on the Hispanic Philippines is generally located. In this chapter, I focalize attention on this “tradition” of Hispano-Philippine writing through the work of Teodoro Kalaw, given his prolific textual production. In fact, Kalaw’s writing was so prolific that historian Teodoro Agoncillo would forgive students of Filipino historiography for calling the American colonial period of Philippine history the “Age of Kalaw” – a period of writing roughly encompassing 1900-1940.<sup>17</sup>

The man centered by Filipino historians such as Agoncillo in such an historical epoch of Philippine-U.S. colonial history was a trained political scientist, lawyer, journalist, and historian born in Lipa, Batangas, in 1884. He studied law at the *Escuela de Derecho* in Manila where he received his *bachelorillato* in Law in 1905. Both the political convulsions of the Philippine-American War and the execution of José Rizal in 1896 were pivotal in Kalaw’s formation as an intellectual and public servant in the Philippine government. He historically is remembered as

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<sup>16</sup> Work by Benedict Anderson, Megan Thomas, Rey Ileto, and Raquel Reyes is cited above. Other important work in this field includes John Blanco’s *Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in Nineteenth Century Philippines* (Univ. of Calif Press, 2009), Paul Kramer’s *The Blood of Government* (UNC Chapel Hill Press, 2006), and Catalán catedrática Gloria Cano’s ample article bibliography whose most pertinent contribution to this particular citation is “‘La Solidaridad’ y el periodismo en las Filipinas en los tiempos de Rizal,” which can be found:

[http://www.bne.es/es/Micrositios/Exposiciones/Rizal/resources/documentos/rizal\\_estudio\\_07.pdf](http://www.bne.es/es/Micrositios/Exposiciones/Rizal/resources/documentos/rizal_estudio_07.pdf). Readers will find in the latter a fascinating connection between the proliferation of periodical publication in the Philippines and “La Gloriosa” republican revolution in Spain in 1868.

<sup>17</sup> Agoncillo, Teodoro A. "Philippine Historiography in the Age of Kalaw." In *History and Culture, Language and Literature: Selected Essays of Teodoro A. Agoncillo*, ed. Bernardita Reyes Churchill. Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2003. 3-29.

the “father of Philippine libraries” and is thus pedestaled as a foundational and institutional figure of Filipino postcolonial epistemology. As with many intellectuals who came of age during the Philippine Revolution against Spain and later the United States, Kalaw’s extensive oeuvre displays an obvious preoccupation with the “Insurrección” and its epistemological innovations.<sup>18</sup> Kalaw displays his own commitments to the production of a nationalist epistemology as a major political thinker in the architecture of the first Philippine Constitution (*La constitución de Malolos*, 1908) and contributed further work on constitutional legal theory on the Filipino republic (*Teorías constitucionales*, 1912; *Cómo se puede mejorar nuestra legislación*, 1913; *El plan constitucional de la revolución Filipina*, 1914; *Manual de ciencia política*, 1918). His work on legal theory ranged from exegetical work on constitutional documents drafted at pivotal moments of the Philippines’ emergence as a republican entity, to more didactic texts that attempted to norm Filipino national consciousness. Kalaw’s later works wax nostalgic, particularly in the years leading up to Commonwealth (1935-1946) as the United States began to substantially reassess its relationship to the Philippines due to the economic and social strains that waves of migrant Filipino labor had on the racial vectors of U.S.-Philippine relations.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Kalaw’s later work published between 1925 and 1931, which includes texts like *La Revolución Filipina* (1925), *Biografía de Gregorio H. del Pilar* (1930), *Epistolario Rizalino* (1930), *Las cartas políticas de Mabini* (1930), and *El espíritu de la Revolución* (1931), demonstrate an insistent and romantic elaboration of the revolutionary ideals and intellectuals that prefigured his contemporaries. One can observe how Kalaw’s work oversaw the

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<sup>18</sup> “Insurrección” refers to the Philippine Insurrection against the United States or the Philippine-American War (1899-1902).

<sup>19</sup> Rick Baldoz, *Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino-America, 1898-1946*. (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

collectivization of Filipino national identity and the economic transformations that would scaffold articulations of Philippine sovereignty, especially given how he is commemorated as managing the very national institutional spaces in which such writings are stored. Due to the divergent although overlapping thematic nature of his work, it is challenging to reduce that work to a single analytical thread. Much of Kalaw's legal thought is encapsulated in his own notion of a "Ciencia del Estado" or a "Science of State," which I view as a technology of governance that oscillated between juridical relations and the management of social relations expressed didactically as gendered relations.<sup>20</sup> More specifically, we see, in Kalaw's formulations, a shift in concern for the political scientific construction of the nation-state and the cultural emphasis on adjudicating the moral components of the national subject.

The initial stages of the "Age of Kalaw" were a time of great transition for the Philippines as it passed from one colonial power, Spain, to a newer imperial power with strategic

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<sup>20</sup> *Teorías constitucionales, notas para un curso de derecho constitucional* published in Manila in 1912, one of Kalaw's earlier works, explicates the "individual," as he or she is interpellated and understood under the aegis of the law, as his primary theoretical anchor for Filipino political science. The notion of the individual – individual responsibility, upward social mobility, and the national norming of the Filipino in networks of global economy – is an important aspect of Kalaw's work as he strives to approach an understanding of the role of law in people's lives. Revealingly, the subtitle, "notas para un curso..." exemplifies the didactic nature of much of Kalaw's work – a quality that shows the interplay between the scientific exegesis of the law and the cultural moralism that circumscribes his theory of state. Indeed, Kalaw's work demonstrates an oscillation between a political scientific view of the national construction of the Philippines and a cultural understanding of the moral components of the national subject. The former being evident in his political and scientific work and the later being more salient in his more moralist work, which draws on folkloric knowledge. In *Teorías*, written during the political interregnum between the supposed end of the Philippine American War and Commonwealth, Kalaw postulates along with his prefacer and initial colonial interlocutor, Spaniard Macario Adriático of La Real Academia Española, that "la Ciencia y el Derecho son condiciones esenciales de la vida humana" where "las ideas madres que engendran los conceptos de Sociedad, Pueblo, Nación y Estado...no significan en el fondo más que grados de desarrollo de una sola sustancia que es el individuo" (x). I find the framing of *Teorías* by Adriático stunning as it portends moral shifts in Kalaw's work particularly regarding his apparent embrace of literary texts that articulate social norms for the nation.



interest in Asia and the Pacific, the United States. While many Filipino intellectuals were deeply invested in anti-clerical critiques of Spanish colonialism, the political upheavals of the Philippine-American War created an increasingly complex “American” landscape that required the adoption of various discursive strategies. In Fanonian terms, postcolonial intellectuals assumed the duty of crafting a “native” history to facilitate both a national identification with a common set of texts and an anticolonial disidentification with the epistemic violences inherent to European colonialism.<sup>21</sup> The political binary of colony and colonizer, indeed, *the* frame through which these (dis)identifications come to articulate a postcolonial intelligentsia, experienced seismic changes as the Philippines came under U.S. colonial rule. Given that the Philippines straddled the historical, geopolitical, and epistemological border(s) of many imperial projects we can observe a significant shift from the binaristic logic of bellicose anticolonialism in early twentieth century cultural production, to a more reformist politics that could be viewed as welcoming American rule and overidentifying with the Enlightenment project.

My citation and analysis of Kalaw is not meant to pedestal his work as somehow semantically exhaustive of what all Filipinos were thinking. Rather than offer an analysis of Kalaw’s bibliography, which could never be exhaustive, I center his travel diary *Hacia la tierra del Zar*, written when many of his political ideals were nascent but still presaged the economic and political transformations that would underwrite the articulation of the Filipino nation-state. *Hacia la tierra del Zar* is Kalaw’s travelogue detailing his travels throughout Asia, Russia, France, and Northern Africa. Accompanying him were various future and then current Filipino statesmen who would play a pivotal role in the shaping of the Philippine government and nation

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<sup>21</sup> Franz Fanon, “On National Culture,” *The Wretched of the Earth*. (New York: Grove Press, 2005).

during U.S. occupation. Significantly, one of Kalaw's closest friends and confidantes accompanied him on this Filipino grand tour, perhaps the most famous Filipino politician in the history of the country: Manuel Quezon. Kalaw and Quezon traveled to an International Congress on navigation that was being held in St. Petersburg in 1908. Kalaw had been appointed Quezon's secretary when he [Quezon] was floor leader of the First Philippine Assembly. Quezon and Kalaw were then the Assembly's representation at the Congress to be held in Russia. While St. Petersburg was their main destination, their travels took them through Tokyo, Hong Kong, Shanghai, Formosa, Moscow, Paris, and Port Said. Quezon is one of the central inspirations of Kalaw's touristic impressions as evidenced by the book's homosocial dedication to

...el que ha sido testigo personal de estas impresiones de viaje; el que ha visto, a lo largo de las estepas rusas, cuadros de miseria; el que ha sentido simultáneamente, en su paso breve por pueblos, el ambiente de la libertad y el ambiente de la opresión; el que sabrá recoger, en una palabra, - porque es inteligente y porque es joven, - de las ciudades populosas, enseñanzas para *su pueblo sometido*, dedica cariñosamente este libro.

...Manila, 10 de septiembre de 1908

the one who has been a personal witness to these travel impressions; the one who has seen, through the Russian steppes, portraits of misery; the one who has simultaneously felt, in his brief passage through villages, the feelings of liberty and oppression; the one who will know how to apprehend, in one word, - because he is intelligent and because he is young, - from these populous cities, teachings for *his own subdued nation*, [I dedicate] this book affectionately.

...Manila, 10 September 1908.<sup>22</sup>

Quezon and Kalaw are the “personal witness[es]” to the “cuadros de miseria,” or “scenes of misery” represented in *Zar*. In the analyses that follow Kalaw refers most notably to post-Boxer Chinese Manchuria and bucolic sub-proletariat Russia. The dedication speaks fascinatingly to the historical positioning of *Zar*, most notably to a relationship *between men*.

When I discovered *Hacia la tierra del Zar* in the Philippine colonial archives at the University of Michigan I found myself captivated by the rich descriptions in Spanish of “other Asias,” to borrow a phrase from Gayatri Spivak.<sup>23</sup> I, like Kalaw and Quezon, actually found myself lost in “Bloody Manchuria,” navigating, but also overidentifying with, the discursive terrains of Yellow Peril and Asian turn-of-the-century economic triumphalism that circumscribe Northeast China’s borders. Rather than orienting me, I found that the sovereign *ilustrado* representing, re-drawing, and critiquing such borders muddled the transparent referent that we might call “Asia.” Kalaw leverages the description of a flexible “Asia” where “enlightened” Filipino writers negotiate a complex domain of intersecting imperial projects. Indeed, *Tierra del Zar* indexes major literal and imaginative shifts in the geopolitical arena of Asia as the United States acquired its first Asian colony. In a section of Kalaw’s travelogue entitled “Bloody Manchuria” in which I will later anchor my analysis, we find a productive yet tense historical ambiguity: *which* conflict precisely left Manchuria in bloody shambles? That is, it is unclear upon a cursory read of this part of the journey towards Czarist Russia which martial conflict has led Manchuria to become so war-torn and destitute. The ambiguity here is intentional given the myriad conflicts that besieged various parts of Asia during the turn of the century. We can

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<sup>22</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908), xv. All the translations of Kalaw’s work in this chapter are mine.

<sup>23</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Other Asias*, (New York: Blackwell, 2007).

assume, however, that the timeplace of the narrative suggests that it is the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), which saw an eight-nation alliance of Western states including Russia and the United States, and a rapidly industrializing Japan against the nationalist movement of Chinese Manchurians. However, given the time of *Tierra*'s publication in 1908 we also could surmise that Kalaw was writing during or shortly after the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). The timing of this conflict is important as it is one of the first and only instances that an Asian nation defeated a European one. One such triumphant bellicose narrative of "Asia" over "Europe" attenuates our historical rendering of Kalaw's text. Japan's victory over Russia provides Kalaw with the representational wherewithal to script Russia as a sign of imperial decadence and degradation and Asia as triumphant in geopolitical hierarchies. Japan becomes a sign of Asian success and, by proxy, scaffolds the Philippines, as recipient of American imperial largesse, as a civilization worthy of racial uplift. In this formulation, however, Kalaw indexes that Japan has its own colonial goal of uplifting an economically potent Asia. In Formosa, what today is known as Taiwan, "toda la atención se puso entonces preferentemente en el azúcar... crearon un sub-departamento del azúcar."<sup>24</sup>

Japanese occupied Taiwan was transformed into a sugar plantation. The transformation was so complete that, indeed, "they created a sub-department" dedicated entirely to the cultivation and exportation of sugar. Kalaw's description of Japanese economic agricolonialism admires the shrewd and efficacious uptick represented in the "milagro japonés." Kalaw writes:

La primera medida es ayudar a los capitales particulares: a los que adquirirían máquinas modernas para el beneficio del azúcar el gobierno ayudaba con una donación de un 20

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 23; "all attention and preference was placed on sugar... they created a sub-department of sugar."

por ciento del capital invertido. Ya, con este emolumento, muchos se sintieron con deseos de emprender el negocio. Actualmente la isla cuenta con 10 máquinas modernas como las que se encuentran en Cuba y Hawaii.<sup>25</sup>

[The first step is to aid in particular capital developments: to those that would acquire modern machines for the benefit of sugar production the government provided a donation of 20 percent of the total capital invested. So, with this stipend, many felt motivated to pursue this business venture. Today the island [Taiwan] possesses 10 modern machines like those found in Cuba and Hawaii.]

This economic “miracle” is measured in U.S. terms: agricolonial development of Cuba and Hawaii. These parallel imperial projects are interesting read in the historical context of the post Russo-Japanese War. Japan triumphed over the nation later to be characterized by Kalaw as a “mediaeval” violent empire given its martial exploits in Manchuria that left it “bloody” beyond recognition. The transformation of Taiwan into an economic hub that helps to fund Japanese imperial expansion cannot, then, be separated from the very visible militarization marked by Kalaw as he travels through the miraculous modern renovation effected by the Asian empire, which has built “fortificaciones y obras de defensa que se construen desde Ki-lung hasta Tai-pé” [Fortifications and defenses are being constructed from Ki-Lung to Taipei].<sup>26</sup>

The sugar economics of Japan are not distanced from similar economic militarism undertaken by the United States “que se encuentr[a] en Cuba y Hawaii.” The U.S.’s sugar plantations have been documented to have prompted and benefitted from a massive migration of

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 22.

Filipino laborers.<sup>27</sup> One might wonder, since it was the United States that sponsored and provided interpretive support for this trip, what is it that they wanted these *ilustrados* to see? The fact that this implicit triangle between a Japanese-occupied territory and the U.S.-occupied territories of the Philippines and Hawaii was deemed by Kalaw to be a political success perhaps suggests mainly that the “consul americano” succeeded in convincing some “ilustrados” of the benefits of their own assimilation. Indeed,

[S]egún los datos que nos facilita el consul americano, antes de la ocupación japonesa, la isla sólo producía 10 mil toneladas de azúcar al año. Hoy, bajo el dominio de los nipones, produce 70 mil. Y tan grande es la esperanza para el porvenir, que los severos y sabios directores del sub departamento, en un momento de legítima fe en su obra, han dicho que dentro de 5 años ellos esperan una producción de 250 mil toneladas.<sup>28</sup>

[[A]ccording to the information provided by the American consul, before the Japanese occupation, the island only produced 10 thousand tons of sugar per year. Today, under the dominion of the Japanese, it produces 70 thousand tons. So large is the hope for the future, that the strict and wise directions of the sub-department [of sugar], in a moment of supreme faith in their work, have stated that within 5 years they expect an output of 250 thousand tons.]

The assiduous attention is given to the governmental organization of sugar economies in Formosa (“sub-departamento del azúcar”) in the name of maximizing the latter’s production. This suggests that the pattern of coloniality characterized by imperial agricolonial development

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<sup>27</sup> Rick Baldoz, *The Third Asiatic Invasion: Migration and Empire in Filipino America, 1898-1946*. (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908), 23.

represents a pivotal step in eventual postcolonial sovereignty. Within this literal and symbolic economy, Kalaw's travelogue can be read as an important historical index of the material economic transformations that transpired at the turn of the century in Asia. Additionally, the positioning of the text between multiple imperial projects (Japan, Russia, the United States) speaks to the ways in which Filipino Enlightenment is scoped in the crosshairs of these competing imperialisms. All this before Kalaw's critique of imperialism inches closer and closer to Russia by way of Manchuria! Before Manchuria it is important to note that in addition to the Boxer Rebellion and the Russo-Japanese War, there is another conflict that adds to Kalaw's materialist critique.

Despite the historical convulsions of the Boxer Rebellion and Russo-Japanese War's effects on European-Asian relations, another "minor" conflict in U.S. imperial history articulates a substrate that we might understand as yet another ghost that haunts Philippine Enlightenment discourse: the Philippine-American War. The collision of a Filipino writer and a "Bloody Manchuria" speaks to the temporal coincidence of the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901) as an anti-imperialist Asian movement with that of the "Philippine Insurrection" (1899-1902). The "insurrection" technically ended at the time of Kalaw's writing but continued in the rebellions of the Muslim South of Mindanao, Philippines. What can be gleaned from the coincidence of an insurrection that had not ended in the Philippines and the representation of post-Boxer China? Manchuria stands as an allegory of a hotly contested Asia – a contact zone between an American occupied Philippines and Russian imperial China. We are left to ponder productively: which Asia are we seeing as we read *Hacia la tierra del Zar*? Which Asia does the *ilustrado* want us to see?

One of the tactics that Kalaw employed in his adaptation to American imperial rule was the ambivalent deployment of Orientalist imagery. To demonstrate the shifts, translations, and mutations that the Philippine Enlightenment experienced (and by extension “Asia” itself), I turn to a scene from Kalaw’s travel diary where multiple Orients converge with and upon U.S.

Empire:

A la hora de la cena, instintivamente, por impulso “racial,” los cinco Filipinos quisieron encontrarse en una sola mesa y dialogar sobre las tristezas de la Patria. Considero a [Theo] Rogers, con criterio liberalmente cosmopolita, un Filipino. Somos: Salvador Roxas, Narciso Alegre, [Manuel] Quezon, Rogers y el que escribe estas cuartillas. Los americanos que, al principio, se sentaban con nosotros, viendo nuestro amable intimismo y nuestros alegres corazones nos dejaron, por completo, el control de la mesa. Es pues, en medio del exótico ambiente, una mesa Filipina.

[During dinner, instinctively, due to a “racial” impulse, the five Filipinos decided to meet at a single table and discuss the tragedies of the Homeland. I consider [Theo] Rogers, with liberally cosmopolitan criteria, a Filipino. We are: Salvador Roxas, Narciso Alegre, [Manuel] Quezon, Rogers and the one that writes these very lines. The Americans who, at first, sat with us, seeing our friendly intimacy and our happy hearts, left us total control of the table. Hence, in the middle of this exotic environment, [there was] a Filipino table].<sup>29</sup>

Additionally at “la mesa Filipina” is where “[u]nos chinos sacerdotales, con sus amplias túnicas blancas, misteriosos dentro de su orientalismo, nos sirven ceremoniosamente, con parsimonia

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<sup>29</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908), 4.



mandarinesca” [some priestly Chinese, with their ample white robes, mysterious in their orientalism, serve us ceremoniously, with mandarinesque parsimoniousness].<sup>30</sup> “La mesa” is oriented within the modern scene of the Japanese gunboat “el Hong Kong Maru,” representative of an economic and martial change for the Philippines as it finds articulation within a shifting frame of reference that is “Asia.” Whose Asia is being represented? In such an imperial patchwork this question becomes increasingly important. While these travel diaries begin in Asia, the reader is confronted with the instability of such a geopolitical referent. Various “Orients” converge at “la mesa Filipina,” unraveling any monolithic image of Asia that we might entertain while reading Southeast Asian literature.<sup>31</sup> These “chinos sacerdotales” are represented as vicars of an oriental essence that comes to circumscribe their “parsimonious” service to the future Philippine heads of state that consort momentarily with their American diplomatic attachés before conversing alone. Yet even as this essential “parsimonia mandarinesca” is held up as fulfilling an austere orientalist stereotype undoubtedly assumed to be circulating in the mind of Kalaw’s imagined reader, the “ilustrado” at the center of the production of Asian-ness in this sentence (indeed, *served* by it: “nos sirven ceremoniosamente”) subverts, while also dining on and furthering, the “mystery” of Orientalism. This subversion is articulated through the crossroads of the Orient that is represented vis-à-vis (cultural) capital and its attendant privileges, enjoyed by Kalaw as Asian author with the powers to perform such a representation. Such subversion, I argue, transpires through the transparency of enlightenment – the ability to represent as a threshold subject within and without Asia as a Filipino through the medium of Spanish. It is this threshold “Asian” sovereign that cannot only exploit Chinese labor through an

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>31</sup> Or unraveling any monolithic image that we might *disrupt* given that Southeast Asia is certainly not the privileged referent connoting “Asia.”

Orientalist racialization but can also invite Americans to the table, as it were, by redefining “Filipino” with “criterio liberalmente cosmopolita.” Indeed, it is the invitation of “America” to the table that elaborates one re-formation of who composes Asia.

As we see in the passage above, in the midst of a presumably rousing discussion about the “tristezas de la Patria,” Kalaw makes a stunning observation – the American, Rogers, is also a “Filipino.” In an extract where the various meanings of Asia appear contested, one interpellation seems to overwrite all other identifications with the “Orient” – an American can become Filipino. This is the “Filipino American” moment that I hold up as a prism through which to read both the shifting political attachments and the chimerical subjectivities of Filipino *ilustrados* in cultural production situated in and around United States-occupied Philippines. (Here, it turns out the American is the most mixed of all metaphors!) This scene furnishes a mode of unexpected hybridity situated along the borders of many imperial projects. *Tierra* is located within a Southeast Asian tradition of colonial literature. However, the text is written entirely in Spanish, attesting to the protracted nature of a Spanish modernity informing the subjectivity of a Filipino literary and political elite. To complicate matters, the Filipino world tour to distant locales strewn across Asia, Europe, and Africa is informed by and comes to inform the American-Japanese imperial Commonwealth period (1934-1946), masquerading as the by-product of an American benevolent assimilation. U.S. tutelary influence is embodied by the spectral presence of Theo Rogers whose only appearance is his disappearance from the dinner table. Yet, his dis/appearance begs the question, who assimilates whom in this instance? “Los americanos” cede “el control de la mesa” to the Filipinos. Such an inclusion and voluntary refusal of an American from “una mesa Filipina” depends upon his inclusion as a Filipino “con criterio liberalmente cosmopolita.” This absent presence of the American at “la mesa filipina”

represents the sovereign's power to draw geopolitical boundaries around national territories and national identity. Indeed, “[*Yo*] considero [*a él*] con criterio liberalmente cosmopólita, un Filipino.” However, the orientation of this “sovereign” space of the table within the martial bowels of a Japanese gunboat en route to Taiwan *and* the orientating of this tablescape by an American imperial apparatus also marks the construction of the *ilustrado* as a product of racial assimilationist uplift. His presence belies an optimistic reading of the future sovereign status of the Philippines and the benefits of their being assimilated into the “American Tropics.”<sup>32</sup>

Through Kalaw's travel narrative we also can observe the ways in which American imperial power spreads over three continents through the production of Filipino Enlightenment. The political subjectivity of the Filipino creole elite, through the machine of American imperialism, amounts to a kind of political oppression, but it also signals another advent and parameter of Filipino American literature. Kalaw's travel narrative is a testament to the unmistakable fact that Hispanophone literary production in the Philippines in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is and should be considered part of a Filipino/American literary tradition.

The linguistic properties of Kalaw's work – irrevocably distinct from the geographic properties of the text given the linguistic hierarchies and landscapes of the modern Philippines and Filipino America – begs several questions: What were the political advantages of a protracted Hispanic modernity for the *ilustrado*? What is the political valence of Spanish Philippine writing during the epoch of American colonialism? Philippine intellectual historian Resil B. Mojares has attested to the new political terrain a cultured Filipino elite had to navigate, noting that many struggled in the face of the changes underway. Citing T.H. Pardo de Tavera,

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<sup>32</sup> Allan Punzalan Isaac, *American Tropics: Articulating Filipino America*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006).

Mojares remarks “other Filipino intellectuals – like Felipe Calderón, Rafael Palma, and Teodoro Kalaw – experienced the American period as a bracing time of experiment and possibility.” While it would be inaccurate to claim that all liberal Filipino anti-colonialists reacted in opposition to Spanish imperialism, it might be accurate to claim that it was “the sentiment of many that the U.S. order was an opportunity for Filipinos to break away from the stultifying ‘structures of the past’ and create themselves anew.”<sup>33</sup> The kinds of seemingly “pro-American” political commitments that we see in Kalaw’s travel diary represent a marked difference from the author’s previous journalism for the pro-independence periodical *El Renacimiento* (“The Renaissance” or “Rebirth”), which he joined in 1903 just five years prior to *Zar*’s publication.<sup>34</sup> Such a change in political thought, however, must be contextualized in the moments during and after the Philippine American War, which, based on conservative estimates, claimed the lives of nearly one-fifth of the Filipino population.<sup>35</sup> And such a loss of life would only be matched forty years later during the World War II Japanese occupation of the Philippines. Because of the context of imperial violence it is historically prudent to read such Kalaw’s movements within the constrained field of agency that is Empire.

It is unproductive to assume that this “new” brand of 20<sup>th</sup> century Filipino *ilustrados* represented a monolithic American imperial apology. A more complicated reading would note that many ilustrados recognized and seized the opportunity to gain position in a rapidly nativizing colonial bureaucracy whose educational and material gains were largely structured by

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<sup>33</sup> Resil B. Mojares, *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de los Reyes and the Production of Modern Knowledge*. (Manila: Ateneo de Manila Press, 2006).

<sup>34</sup> “Philippine Center for Masonic Studies.”

<http://www.philippinemasonry.org/kalaws-fight-for-philippine-masonic-sovereignty.html>

<sup>35</sup> John Blanco, *Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines*. (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 2009).

a United States imperial apparatus. I have argued thus far that the absent presence of the United States in Kalaw's travel narrative does not signify its displacement from the sovereignty of the Philippine Enlightenment. Rather, the deployment of Orientalist imagery and affirmation of exploitative imperial economic developments by Japan (and tacitly by the United States) fashions a flexibly defined "Asia" that Kalaw can suffuse with new political meanings. The pliancy of "Asia" as an unstable referent simultaneously connoting Orientalist savage and savant, demonstrates that Kalaw's *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* evokes the colonial travel narrative to represent the movement of global capital. The *ilustrado* as traveler becomes the very figure through which American imperial and economic interests ramify through a flexibly redefined "Asia." This cartographic imperative transpires through the homosocial continuum (the table conversation between illustrated men) of the Philippine Enlightenment. However, there are several episodic interventions that Kalaw stages in his narration that shifts the homosociality of the Enlightenment to allow a consideration of the genre of the travel narrative itself through a postcolonial disability studies lens.

*The able-minded ilustrado meets the native disabled girl*

The representation of Manchurian dissent in opposition to the presence of Russian military force serves as the literary mechanism through which Kalaw politically reimagines "Asia." Such re-imagination of the space of "Asia" endows it with a sense of pliancy that can be understood in the context of the itinerancy of the *ilustrado* traveler and his power to represent such a space through Spanish under the beneficent tutelage of American Empire. As the Filipinos depart Manchuria and reach a bucolic Russian countryside, Kalaw presents the material effects of poverty that the Russian state has all but ensured for its citizens:

Ayer, en uno de esos villorrios oscuros en donde los trenes hacen paradas momentáneas, mi compañero, Quezon se acercó a un grupo de emigrantes que acababan de llegar al pueblo, queriendo contemplar de cerca a aquellas pobres víctimas del hambre.

Indudablemente, serían miembros de una familia. El compañero llamó a un mugriento niño de 5 años, enclenque y tímido, figura del hambre y del esclavo, con un abrigo que era un trapo, le dió una monedita rusa. La madre que lo vió, no pudiendo ocultar su satisfacción y su gratitud, ordenó al hijo, en lengua moscovita, que besara la mano del buen extranjero.

Y el niño, educado en la sumisión de todo un pueblo, se acercó con mucho miedo al dadivoso compañero y le besó la mano generosa.

Ese cuadro simbólico representa la educación social de una raza (87).

Yesterday, in one of those obscure hamlets where trains make but fleeting stops, my friend, Quezon, approaches a group of emigrants that were just arriving to the village, with the desire to inspect these poor victims of famine. Undoubtedly, they were members of one family. My friend called to a filthy boy of five years, sickly and shy, the figure of hunger and poverty, with a rag for a coat, he [Quezon] gave him a Russian coin. The mother saw it; unable to hide her satisfaction and her gratitude, ordered her son, in Russian, to kiss the hand of the kind foreigner.

And the boy, brought up in the submission of an entire people, fearfully approached my generous friend and kissed his benevolent hand.

This symbolic portrait represents the social education of a race.<sup>36</sup>

In this scene we observe Quezon, the future first President of the Commonwealth of the Philippines, represented as a “kind foreigner” extending his “benevolent hand” to a poverty-stricken Russian boy. Quezon charitably gifts him a “Russian coin.” In the context of the “benevolent assimilation” of American imperialism in the Philippines, this encounter between the white Russian impoverished boy and the Filipino intellectual takes on a special meaning. One can observe in the above passage one of the “cuadros de miseria,” or “portraits of misery,” that Kalaw alludes to in his dedication to the star of this particular scene, Quezon. The future Head of State is depicted as a “príncipe filipino” (a Filipino prince), a monarchical reference meant to temper the oppression of the subproletariat Russian boy (under the Russian monarchy) with the benevolent hopefulness that is afforded the charity of the *ilustrado*. The benevolence in this scene should not shock those familiar with the discursive arrangements that organized the affect of American imperialism in the Philippines as one of “white love,” as theorized by historians like Vicente Rafael.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, couched in the affect of “love” for the Americans’ “little brown brother” was the white man’s burden to educate the Filipino in the ways of the civilized world. The polarity between civilized American and barbaric Filipino is upended in this representation of *ilustrado* charity to the white boy, ruined by the imperial despotism of Russia – a decadence only amplified by the Manchuria “ensangrentada” (bloody) preceding such descriptions of white poverty.

A whiteness ruined by imperialism is saved by the *ilustrado*. The political reversal here is that of the erudite *ilustrado* benevolently extending his “mano generosa” to the “mugriento

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<sup>36</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908), 87.

<sup>37</sup> Vicente Rafael, *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2000).

niño.” This scene of “white love,” or rather, love for the white boy, speaks to the racialized gendered and sexualized encounter between the “white daddy/native boy;” indeed, the pivotal frame through which I suggest we should understand the reversal that Kalaw stages for his reader. It is through such a reversal that we can note the strategy through which Kalaw represents “Asia” as a site for reclamation and reimagination vis-à-vis the ‘civilizing’ discourse of Filipino Enlightenment. The repetition of such a civilizationist paradigm gains its iterative power through the medium of travel narration. Kalaw stages and resignifies the colonial encounter through Quezon’s encounter with the white boy. This re-orientes the direction of power theorized by Mary Louise Pratt as the “contact zone.” “Contact zones” describe the highly syncretic space where “disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.”<sup>38</sup> Quezon and Kalaw, however, arrive to this contact zone (here the Russian countryside) as enlightened modern subjects rather than native subjects beholden to colonial uplift. They uplift whiteness in an epic reversal of the colonial trope of “white love,” theorized by Filipino historian, Vicente Rafael, as the benevolent fraternal yet eroticized racial uplift of the Filipino brown brother. This background noise of “white love,” or infantilizing racial uplift of the native boy, makes the scene between Filipino modern subject and white provincial child a productive index of the intersectionality of colonial encounter.

Queer of color theorist Eng Beng Lim has examined how such encounters are steeped in various gendered and sexualized histories of colonial relations refracted through the paradigm of the “white man/native boy.”<sup>39</sup> Filipino history’s invocation of the trope of white love is, I suggest, an instantiation of the paradigm that Lim attempts to consolidate in his efforts to

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<sup>38</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes*, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Eng Beng Lim, *Brown Boys and Rice Queens*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2013), 8, 10.



globalize queer of color analysis. Filipino American history has been established that where colonial Hispanic Filipino elite is concerned we historically observe a repetition of patterns of internal colonialism. In the context of the Philippine Enlightenment that repetition of coloniality has been termed “imperial indigenisms.”<sup>40</sup> Empire as an “indigenism” consolidates the intellectual gains of Filipino patrimony of the past a reorients them towards a nativising colonial bureaucracy in the present represented by Kalaw in the Russian countryside. This demonstrates both the constrained agency of the *ilustrado* and the problematic limitations of sovereign cognition.<sup>41</sup> The “benevolent assimilationist” protocols of U.S. imperialism in the Philippines similarly gain traction as an intellectual project of colonial benevolence in Kalaw’s staging of Quezon and the white Russian boy. In much the same way Filipino *ilustrados* reformulated and iterated a “Philippine Enlightenment” when confronted with American Empire, scholars like Lim understand the dyad of the white man/native boy as a repetition of an “unhomely” trope that always already reads racialized gender and sexuality in colonialism.<sup>42</sup> Such a paradigm consolidates for analysis the ways in which racialized gendered relations are constitutive of a Filipino (anti)colonial intellectual project at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In one sense we can read as already a factual state of affairs that the very production of this travel narrative is a repetition of the native boy/colonial father dyad that Lim gets at. The historiographical precedent in Filipino Studies’ analyses of “white love” has concluded as much. A crucial difference is the subtle and overt ways in which “Asia” is itself a fertile and shifting

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<sup>40</sup> Kramer, *The Blood of Government* (2006).

<sup>41</sup> Kramer, *The Blood of Government* (2006).

<sup>42</sup> Here I borrow Homi Bhabha’s notion of the “unhomely” as a colonial affect oscillating between the abject and the familiar. Here I mean that the white man/native boy dyad is an affectively familiar structuring metonymy for colonialism yet is also vigorously refused as legible knowledge. It is thus uncanny in its familiarity yet abject in its uneven uptake as a paradigm of postcolonial critique.

ground of contested meanings that is resignified depending on the colonial project described in the journey towards the Kremlin. Cultural productions such as these leverage themselves on a polysemous “transnational and sometimes unruly itinerary...meant to trouble the ascribed unidirectionality of critical and complicit energies and logics that often accompany the provenance of ‘Asia’ as a stable and static category in [the] twentieth century.”<sup>43</sup> Lim takes to task the “classic colonial/native encounter of post-Enlightenment modernity” wherein the product of structural colonial seduction is a rational colonial white subject that is fully formed and agentive and thus “inspires a biography” whilst the native, brown bottom is infantilized, bounded and fetishized by/as tradition thus “disappear[ing] into a mob.”<sup>44</sup> I add to this dyadic paradigm by considering the contributions of postcolonial enlightenment movements in a supposedly “post-Enlightenment modernity,” which Lim’s homosocial/homoerotic encounter takes as its historical and temporal assumption. *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* is a crucial text detailing the beginning of U.S. imperial power’s relationship with a “post”-Enlightenment, post (Spanish) colonial Filipino *ilustrado* that repeats the dyadic native boy/white daddy colonial encounter with a difference: it is the biography of enlightened “postcolonial” brown boys that we consider as they simultaneously center and disappear their white men (both Spanish and “American”).

The “white daddy”/“brown (native) boy” dyad (what in Filipino American critiques of U.S. Empire is read as a fraternal (if tacitly sexualized) relation of white male anti/imperialist and “little brown brother”) help us to understand not only the gendered/racialized components of American empire in the Philippines but also the ways in which problematic gender and sexual politics come to underwrite the Filipino Enlightenment as well. As we see in the colonial

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<sup>43</sup> Lim, 10-11.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 8.

encounter between Quezon (the Filipino prince) and the Russian boy, there is a powerful political reversal of the trope Lim offers us. Instead it is the *ilustrado* extending his benevolent colonial hand to the white child ruined by a failed anti-modern Russian empire. However, the failures of another ‘Asian’ imperialism in this scene are a foil for the success of the benevolent assimilation of these Filipinos into a U.S. imperial imaginary of racial uplift for the Philippines. That is to say, the success of the *ilustrado* in this scene only makes sense given his receipt of American imperial largesse – the little brown boy grown up. Therefore, the cursory liberating potential of the dyadic “brown *ilustrado* man/ off-whitish child” gains traction in its underlying mode of production: manhood and masculinity attained through the tutelage of an absent white daddy.

There is one other such staging of colonial encounter that is enabled by the homosocial enlightenment logics proliferated by Kalaw: where the cognitively able-bodied *ilustrado* meets the native disabled girl. The disappearance of the “white daddy” is complicated by the conjuring of a symbolically iterated impaired figure of the Asian woman as articulated by the social practice of footbinding. This figure is disabled through the discursive exclusion from enlightened cognition that characterizes the masculinist domain of Enlightenment proper as well as its postcolonial rearticulations. Additionally, the re-presentation of the figure of “Woman”<sup>45</sup> as physically impaired provides another vista through which to view the discourse of Yellow Peril that characterizes Kalaw’s appraisal of China as a “mancha negra, sucia, ululante” [black, dirty,

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<sup>45</sup> Gayatri Spivak, “Woman in Difference: Mahasweta Devi’s ‘Doulouti the Bountiful,’” *Cultural Critique* (Winter 1989-1990), 105-128. I use Spivak’s analysis of the figure of “Woman” not just as a literal referent in colonial relations but also as a symbolic figure evacuated of particular meaning. She is a discursive mechanism through which colonial paternalism gets enacted. This will come into play when I specify a similar symbolic referent: that of the “Chinese Woman” evacuated of interiority who simply exists as a deformed figure marking the Philippines as a successful project of racial uplift.

wailing stain]. The emergence of this figure, which precipitates the colonial encounter of *ilustrado* / disabled girl, begins in Manchuria where Kalaw poses the question: “¿Hay razas destinadas a morir?”<sup>46</sup>

Nirmala Erevelles argues that “disability and war” should be a crucial framework through which “feminist disability studies and third world feminism” understand the production of disability through the machine of imperialism. Erevelles pushes for a materialist understanding of disability as a condition, response, and sign of the proliferation of war since imperial conflicts historically are “one of the largest producers of disability.”<sup>47</sup> Disability, then, whether it takes the form of economic debility, bodily harm, environmental devastation, “slow death,” or the presumption of incompetence, is a testament to the widespread precarity orchestrated in colonial relations. Disability, I suggest, systematically defines the “asymmetry” in power relations constitutive of the “contact zone” in which travel narrative representations circulate. The process of racialization in which imperialism is thoroughly embedded utilizes disability tautologically as a major technology for justifying its own existence. Erevelles’ intervention, alongside Pratt and Lim’s formulations of the colonial encounter, allow us to see colonialism as a systematic imposition of mass disablement, and postcolonialism as a theoretical worldview dealing with the aftermath of imposed debilities and perceived disability. While physical debility and impairment are certainly aspects of a critique of imperial conflict that disability studies should explore, the examination of such debilitating effects of empire should also include analysis of the assumptions around intelligence and cognitive capacity that oftentimes justify imperialism as a benevolent enterprise. In other words, imperialism gains moral traction insofar as it articulates

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<sup>46</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908), 83.

<sup>47</sup> Erevelles, 132.

itself as a project that restores the battered brown body to approximate the “normate” white (imperial) body.<sup>48</sup> Kalaw takes up the presumption that such benevolence is a constitutive aspect of any successful empire. For Kalaw, more specifically, his rhetorical question about the horizon of death that colonial conflict inevitably hails is posed as part of an ongoing reflection on the presence of Russia in Manchuria as testament to what failed imperialism looks like – an “Imperio moscovita” “despótica” “paneslavista” succumbing to a base “idolatría” “ortodoxa” that proves that “en la Santa Rusia hay más ignorancia que religión.”<sup>49</sup>

Such stunning swirling critiques of a superstitious anti-modern Russia (a “folkloric” empire) juxtaposed with the contradiction of a devout enlightened Philippines, leads Kalaw to come to the remarkable conclusion that “Esto no es Europa, esto es Asia.”<sup>50</sup> One possible but rather improbable reading of this statement, invested in an anticolonial politics, would see the liberation of Manchuria from Russian imperial control in a post-Boxer historical moment. Such an anticolonial sentiment connects a twentieth century repetition of Filipino Enlightenment to a broader Asian anti-imperialism that would rewrite the necropolitical destiny of “Asia” as a “race” that is “destined to die.” In reality, though, the declaration of “Asia-Europe” as an oppositional binary in all likelihood did not signal a utopian political reversal. That is, Kalaw did not write these words about Manchuria or in direct reference to Russian imperialism in China. While a “bloody Manchuria” is certainly not part of the political worldview that Kalaw would

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<sup>48</sup> Rosemary Garland-Thomson, “Integrating Disability, Transforming Feminist Theory,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis, (New York: Routledge, 2013) 333-353

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 78, 143-144, 188. My translation (adjectival modifiers precede nouns to follow conventional English structure): A “despotic” “Slavic [nationalist]” “Moscovite Empire” succumbing to a base “orthodox” “idolatry” that proves that “in Holy Russia there is more ignorance than religion.” All translations in this chapter are mine.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 144. “This is not Europe, this is Asia.”

like to impart to his reader, he does not claim Manchuria *for* “Asia;” rather, he disclaims Russia as European, “Slavism” as Euro-modernity. Russia *is* Asia. Kalaw writes:

¿En qué consiste ese paneslavismo? ¿Cuál es su finalidad? ¿De qué tiempo data? No es posible tratar en estas breves impresiones de asuntos de capital importancia para el desenvolvimiento actual del Imperio moscovita. Cuando los europeos llegan a las puertas de Moscow, desde donde se abre ante la curiosidad natural de los turistas un mundo sepultado en la Edad Media, con sus viejas Iglesias y sus íconos pálidos y todopoderosos, no pueden menos exclamar: – *Esto no es Europa: esto es Asia.*

[What does this Slavism consist of? What is its objective? From what time does it originate? In these brief impressions, it’s not possible to engage such important issues for the current development of the Moscovite [Russian] Empire. When European tourists arrive at the portals of Moscow in which a world stuck in the Middle Ages is opened before their natural curiosity, with its old churches and its pale omnipotent icons, they won’t be able but to exclaim: *This is not Europe: this is Asia.*]<sup>51</sup>

The European touristic subject (a subjectivity that Kalaw tacitly claims for himself) is at the “portals of Moscow,” on the steps and under the steppes of the Kremlin. However, we cannot disentangle Moscow from Manchuria in the narrative progression that Kalaw choreographs. His reflection on the despotic decadence of the superstitious empire, with its “pale” mediaeval “icons” is connected to the cruelty of the imperial project of its neighbor, China. In an oblique way, Kalaw does call for the decolonization of Chinese Manchuria. However, he does so through a narrative and epistemological reliance on an Orientalist project that equally attests to the

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 143-144.

savagery and pre-modernity of Asia – not *his* Asia, though: ironically enough, Russia’s Asia. “Russia’s Asia” (possessive *and* contraction) has three convergent yet distinct meanings here: (1) Russia is barbaric in its imperialism of Asia; (2) additionally, Russia’s savagery and backwards superstition is measured through its qualitative similarity to and its subsumption into “Asia” as it is examined by a European (read: Filipino) touristic gaze; (3) the very object of Russia’s imperial possession: China. China is scripted into the savior complex constitutive of the *ilustrado*’s redefinition of Asia. China is discursively “saved” through a critique of a Russian imperial project. However, the critique of Russia as anti-modern depends on an Orientalist vision of China. China becomes the Orientalist and barbaric substrate upon which the Philippine Enlightenment relies. In an earlier reflection on Kalaw’s voyage through Hong Kong he observes that “[d]esde el primer hasta el último momento, la única nota sensacional que hiere y que cautiva son *esas manchas negras, sucias, ululantes*, que se llaman ‘chinos’...lo primero que huele es a chino.”<sup>52</sup> Significantly, the description of a Chinese essence as a “black, dirty, wailing stain” precedes a section entitled “Peligro Amarillo” or “Yellow Peril.” However, as we will observe, it is not simply the national space of China that serves as the atavist catalyst of a new, better Asian enlightened subject. Rather, what’s more interesting here is China’s corporal and material representation as the racialized gendered disabled figure vis-à-vis its practices of footbinding. Hence the question of “are there races destined to die?” that began this section can refer to the supposed slow death of the racialized gendered figure of the “Chinese Woman” whose feet are bound.

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. Emphasis added. Translation: “from the first to the last moment, the only sensational observation that injures and captivates are those black, dirty, wailing stains that are called “the Chinese”...the first thing one smells is Chinese.”

Pero estas chinas, estas pobres chinas, con sus pies aprisionados, muy diminutos, ¿en qué piensan, qué hacen, por qué están tristes? Nunca una sonrisa amable asomó a sus caras pintadas de rosa, nunca. Y si alguna vez lo hicieron fue porque, queriendo dar señales de alegría, no tuvieron más remedio que abrir sus bocas pequeñas y hacer brillar sus dientes marfileños.

But these Chinese girls, these poor Chinese girls, with their imprisoned feet, so diminutive; what are they thinking, what do they do, why are they sad? Never does a smile appear on their rose-colored faces. Never. And if they do occasionally smile, wanting to give signs of happiness, they had not remedy but to open their small mouths and let their ivory teeth shine.<sup>53</sup>

This discourse of footbinding and the construction of Chinese femininity represented through the trope of “pies aprisionados” is a crucial moment in Kalaw’s writing insofar as a discourse concerning Asian womanhood underlies various modes of production for what I understand to be both the “first” and “second” waves of Filipino Enlightenment.<sup>54</sup> Kalaw deploys the iconic image of bound feet to mark the Chinese’s anti-modernity vis-à-vis a Western definition of civilization.

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<sup>53</sup> Teodoro Kalaw, *Hacia la tierra del Zar*. (Manila: Librería Manila Filatélica, 1908), 17.

<sup>54</sup> To clarify: the “first” wave of the Philippine Enlightenment is historiographically located in the 19<sup>th</sup> century before the advent of American imperial rule. The “second” wave is precisely the repetition of this nationalist story of intellectual liberation from Spain under the duress of U.S. “benevolent assimilation” during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the periodizing move of a “wave” theory for this particular postcolonial enlightenment project may have its limitations, it is pedagogically useful in elaborating how such masculinist nationalist tropes are recycled and reanimated towards new capitalist ends. Indeed, this might make a strong case for the examination of a “third” wave of Filipino Enlightenment in which another colonial encounter is staged: between “minority politics” and the spectre of “the Philippine Enlightenment.”



Dorothy Ko exhaustively studied the cultural and historical underpinnings around the social practice of footbinding. She argues that there exists many footbindings, not just one.<sup>55</sup> That is, it is impossible to understand such a geographically and temporally pervasive cultural practice through one framework; instead, we must be historically specific in any analysis or supposedly “moral” claim about gender asymmetries in Chinese society. Ko situates herself “outside the anti-footbinding enlightenment discourse” that only ever ensures Western modernity as the arbiter of gender parity. Like Spivak she objects to the paradigm of “white men saving brown women from brown men.”<sup>56</sup> Yet, what is to be made of brown men saving brown women from brown men?

A native disabled girl/ native enlightenment boy dichotomy frames Kalaw’s travel narrative, the arc of his journey to the heart of (Russian) ‘darkness.’ A connection exists between Kalaw’s depiction of the material division of international labor and the cognitive division of intellectual capacities intrinsic to postcolonial enlightenments. The *ilustrados*’ touristic itinerary as portrayed in *Zar* mirrors and relies on the movement of capital; indeed, the *ilustrado* border crosses as a liberal subject of enlightenment due to the liberalization of borders to facilitate the movements of transnational capital at the turn of the twentieth century. This movement, however, ironically relies on the stasis of “Asia” flexibly reinterpreted – an Asia literally and figuratively bound. The static image that constrains and enables the duality of the “Asia” that Kalaw articulates is the racialized gendered (and inevitably sexualized) image of Chinese

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<sup>55</sup> Dorothy Ko, *Cinderella’s Sisters: A Revisionist History of Footbinding*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007).

<sup>56</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, Ed. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313.

footbinding. It is through the disabled Asian female body that a cognitively judicious and able-bodied Filipino *ilustrado* can critique failed imperial projects in and around Asia (Russia) while simultaneously, albeit ambivalently, manipulate American imperial interests to promote Filipino sovereignty. But, following Ko, what kind of footbinding in particular does Kalaw describe?

What I claim via this illustration of “pies aprisionados” is that the social integuments of disability are rooted in enlightened cognition. The interiority of the “Chinese Woman” debilitated by the erotic gaze of Chinese men (and alternatively aestheticized by the enlightened gaze of the *ilustrado*) is never really considered. The “Chinese Woman” is only operative as a symbol evacuated of interiority. She ornaments Kalaw’s travel narrative through the spectacle of her impairment. Here the colonial gaze of the Philippine Enlightenment maneuvers through and functions as the “stare” dehumanizing the disabled body foundational to Western modernity’s constitution of “normate” bodies.<sup>57</sup> “Saving” the native disabled girl does not involve a robust consideration of her interior life, her subjective experience, or the material conditions in which footbinding operates. Instead, we receive a line of questioning from Kalaw: “what are they thinking, what do they do, why are they sad?” Robust answers to these questions never materialize in Kalaw’s Orientalist impressions. Instead, a remark on their smile of “ivory teeth” from a moment of provisional and performed happiness is rendered, repeating the ornamental image-conscious discourse that could be said to have imprisoned their feet in the first place. “Chinese Woman’s” experiences are never truly elaborated. Instead, she is rendered political symbol in order to buttress western rationality as the most desirable human and gender rights model. Kalaw subscribes to a Western model of gender parity and the normative body in order to become the master of subjectivity in this instance. In the same vein, Chinese Woman’s entire

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<sup>57</sup> Erevelles, 3, 126-7.

corporeal (and cognitive) existence, impossible insofar as she remains a symbol, is subsumed by the fetishization of her impairment. The female body is functionalized as a machine whose purity is not to be disturbed by the earthly barbaric practices of a backwards culture. This reading corroborates Ko's excavation of the historical roots of the antfootbinding movement in British missionary culture. According to Ko, the "body as machine" as a theological concept cannot be fully explained through a supposedly divine law that could never really secure the gender equality upheld by Western societies – the language of parity is a convenient cloak for Orientalist discourse that also masks British imperial projects in China. The real "sin" of the practice of footbinding is that it hinders the productivity of the body. The disabled body hinders full incorporation into capitalist systems of labor exploitation. It takes a cognitive "enlightenment discourse," such as that exemplified by "antfootbinding" societies and what I have been calling the "Philippine Enlightenment," to secure the liberal humanist discourse that ensures the proper "democratic" protection of bodies from debilities and impairments that would halt the movement of transnational capital. Kalaw's racial materialist grand tour affirms cognitive capacity through the impaired ornamentalization of these "pobres chinas" "aprisionadas." I agree with Ko's gesture that Enlightenment discourses can be seen as trafficking in "[a] loathing for the stagnant female body"<sup>58</sup> one whose impairment is at odds with the sovereign cognition that serves capitalist penetration into Asia – a capitalist penetration that is venerated earlier in Japanese-occupied Taiwan and tacitly in U.S.-occupied Philippines.

In this section I have argued that the homosocial continuum gains traction through variously staged colonial encounters in which the *ilustrado* engages a representational impulse that allows for a materialist redefinition of Asia. Initially I established the Philippine

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<sup>58</sup> Ko, 27.

Enlightenment as a homosocial continuum that traverses from the United States *through* the Philippines thus ramifying American imperial power through the Asia that Kalaw pliantly redefines. This homosocial continuum is concretized through the colonial reversal of “white love” performed in Quezon’s patronizing uplift of the Russian white boy in the depressed countryside rendered as “cuadro de miseria.” This scene adds additional nuance to the queer of color critique of the colonial encounter thematized as a discursive repetition of the “white daddy/native boy” dyad. Kalaw’s travel narrative “disappears” the white daddy, thus resignifying the power relation of “white love.” However, the underlying substrate upon which these resignifications and disidentifications with white imperial paternalism occur is the colonial encounter between the cognitively capacitated *ilustrado* and the native disabled girl. This girl is wholly embodied by and subsumed into the fetish of her impairment – the symbol of Chinese Woman and her bound feet. Her appearance in the travel narrative is crucial to re-interpreting this colonial genre through a postcolonial disability studies optic. The cognitive itinerancy and border crossing of the *ilustrado* is secured through the stasis and binding of the impaired Asian female body. Since the movements of the *ilustrado* reflect the movement of transnational capital in Asia, disability (and the cognitive capacity that is immanent in disability’s transcendence) becomes the node through which capital can “burrow into the body” to paraphrase Neferti Tadiar.<sup>59</sup> While this argument certainly mimics the itinerant subjectivity constantly in flux and moving in *Hacia la Tierra del Zar*, I formulate it as part of a broader critique in this chapter to continue the nascent intellectual project of a Postcolonial Disability Studies.

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<sup>59</sup> Neferti X. Tadiar, *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Making of Globalization*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2009).

### Chapter III The Filipina Supercrip: the “Trigueña” Convalescent

*Al lector...*

José Reyes’ *Novela de la vida real* (1930) emerged at a particularly momentous time of “la vida nacional” [“the national life”] of the Philippines. What Reyes calls his “granito de arena a la magna labor pro-patria” [“grain of sand to the monumental labor of affirming the motherland”]<sup>1</sup> marks a moment of imminent political transition of the Philippines under US imperial control. *Vida real* precedes a US-awarded and thus “benevolent” emancipation from American control. The Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934) brought about the shift to a Commonwealth, installing the Philippines’ “first” president, Manuel Quezon—who was the subject of Teodoro Kalaw’s love letter to the illustrious politician in *Hacia la tierra del zar* (1908) I examined in the previous chapter. Reyes’ book can be directly placed in a genealogy of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Hispanic Philippine letters vis-à-vis Kalaw. Indeed, Kalaw himself wrote the *prólogo* to Reyes’s novel endorsing its publication and encouraging its readership. Kalaw’s paratextual matter invokes

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<sup>1</sup> There are several translations for “patria.” Because this chapter will engage in representations of gender and race in realist Philippine literature, it is productive to understand the gendered dimensions of “patria” from a translator’s standpoint. Here I translate it as “motherland.” However, “fatherland” given the *paternal* inflections of “patria” could also be appropriate. “Homeland” could be a possible neutral translation. Ironically enough, translations of “madre patria” vary with regards to gender assignation of the nation: literally “mother country” but fatherland is also acceptable. In order to maintain the meanings of the relation of power inscribed in Reyes’ “granito de arena a la magna labor pro-patria” I’ve elected to translate as “motherland.” The intellectual laborer (always male) works on the improvement of the nation (almost always feminized).

markers of colonial disability implying the rehabilitative role of Spanish in the moral health of the nation. He writes:

Hay que aplaudir el celo y la asiduidad del Sr. José G. Reyes al escribir artículos y cuentos de carácter esencialmente educador. Ahora que abundan libros que aunque brillantemente escritos son de tendencias y valor moral discutibles para nuestra juventud, la lectura que nos proporcionan las obras del Sr. Reyes constituye una excepción muy *saludable*.

He leído con interés esta novela y la recomiendo a los que en Filipinas leen el castellano o quieren aprenderlo, que son desgraciadamente pocos en número cada día. Son escenas de ambiente local, de argumento local, de personajes locales, narradas con plácida sencillez para hacer resaltar vicios, inclinaciones malas, que deben corregirse, ó virtudes humanas que deben exaltarse. Como los capítulos son cortos, y cada uno tiene su “motivo” propio, su lectura no cansa.<sup>2</sup>

[One must applaud the zeal and assiduousness of Mr. José G. Reyes on writing articles and short stories with an essentially didactic character. Although many brilliantly written books abound nowadays, they share morally questionable values and tendencies for our youth. The reading that the works of Reyes provide us constitute a very *healthy* exception.

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<sup>2</sup> Reyes, *Novela de la vida real* (1930), vii. My emphasis.

I have read with interest this novel and I recommend it to those in the Philippines that read Castilian or who want to learn it, which are unfortunately few in number each day. [Within] are portraits of local environments, with familiar plots, and local characters, narrated with a placid simplicity that points out vices and bad inclinations which should be corrected, or human virtues that should be exalted. As the chapters are short, and each has its own “motive,” its reading is never tiring.]<sup>3</sup>

Kalaw frames the publication and reception of Reyes’s novel within a context of moral uncertainty for the Philippines.<sup>4</sup> Brilliantly written books abound, he writes, which present “disputable” or dubious morality for young impressionable readers. For Kalaw, Reyes makes an intervention into moral uncertainty with his “healthy” exception. “Saludable” here has the meaning of helpful or beneficial. However, I suggest that Kalaw has the overall moral health of the nation in mind. Reading Kalaw’s and Reyes’s “saludable” intervention within a framework of postcolonial disability, we can understand *Novela* as possessing a didactic and pedagogic function meant to rehabilitate the national body. This national body has historically been the mestizo ilustrado who has metonymized a sovereign able-minded Philippines -- an able-mindedness tied to “mestizo” characteristics. However, as we will see, the homosocial conversation between enlightened mestizos is channeled through management of the Filipina

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<sup>3</sup> I furnish Reyes’s text in the original Spanish. All English translations of his work are mine.

<sup>4</sup> What might have been informing the uncertainty here? This is around the time of shifting patterns of gender—the New Woman. This nascent yet robust feminism definitely made its way to Southeast Asia. This would help to explain why Filipina women are sites of anxiety and discipline vis-à-vis conservative masculinist statecraft. There are many sources that talk about New Woman discourses amply. The first I draw upon is Denise Cruz’s *Transpacific Femininities* (Durham: Duke UP, 2012). I work more closely with Cruz’s text below. Another source that more directly interrogates the globalization of the new Woman discourse is *The Modern Girl Around the World: Consumption, Modernity, and Globalization* (Durham: Duke UP, 2008).

body -- a body that is supercrippled vis-à-vis her relationship to ever-shifting cultural, political, and linguistic registers. As such, the Filipina body's rehabilitation is rhetorically and linguistically tied to Spanish. In his prologue, Kalaw makes us conscious of the historical and social context in which Philippine Spanish language writing circulates. The population of those with the ability to read in "Castilian" has not been historically robust in the Philippines.<sup>5</sup> It should not surprise us that a Filipino writer composing in Spanish for the past previous three decades (Kalaw) would lament that, of Hispanophone Filipinos, there are "unfortunately few in number each day."<sup>6</sup>

What is striking in this prefatory matter is that the declination of Spanish obtains within the same framework as the debilitated moral state of the Philippines. As such, Kalaw also points out the diagnostic nature of *Novela*. Reyes, by Kalaw's estimation, uses literature to diagnose the "vicios" and "inclinaciones males, que deben corregirse." Society suffers from "vices" and "bad inclinations" that should be corrected. Philippine letters in Spanish can be one site through which such diagnosis can take place. The diagnostic role and rehabilitative power of "las letras hispánicas filipinas" is corroborated earlier in the prologue with Kalaw extolling Reyes as a "healthy exception" to the morally dubious norm he has observed. Readers should observe how the "healthiness" exemplified by the literary acumen of Reyes coincides with the provocation to maintain Castilian in the Philippine Republic. While "castellano" or "Wikang kastilya," if one prefers one Tagalog term,<sup>7</sup> was never widely spoken in the archipelago, we see in this exchange

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<sup>5</sup> John Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines: Spanish Aims and Filipino Responses, 1565-1700* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).

<sup>6</sup> Reyes, vii.

<sup>7</sup> Hispanists should note that Philippine Tagalog, as well as several other Philippine languages, commonly refer to the Spanish language as "wikang Kastilya," which preserves the geographic



between statesman and author an effort in maintaining it very late into US colonial rule; a maintenance that would no doubt be intended to continue into the Commonwealth era.

Additionally, this novel demonstrates the way that cultural production and the state were allied in the linguistic preservation of the Philippine language of enlightenment. What I suggest here is that Spanish becomes not only the language of Enlightenment but also the choice diagnostic tool for a local, even bucolic, vista of a politically healthy and morally robust Philippines. Indeed, in reading the prologue and the narrative vignettes that follow, one with very little knowledge of the Philippines might be surprised to learn that Spanish is actually not an indigenous or autochthonous language facing extinction due to US imperial and Anglophonic influence. This explains why Kalaw desires to localize the language; again, *Novela's* vignettes “son escenas de ambiente local, de argumento local, de personajes locales.” The locality of such “escenas” belies their transnational and colonially inflected composition.<sup>8</sup> Can there exist Filipino narrative “de argumento local” in Spanish?<sup>9</sup> Regardless of the answer to this question, the narrative effect and political argument is clear: Spanish *per se* is certainly one of the “virtudes humanas que deben

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specificity of what we globally today know as Spanish. Indeed, any language spoken in the Spanish part of the Iberian Peninsula could be referred to as a form of “Spanish.”

<sup>8</sup> Adam Lifshey, *Subversions of the American Century* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Spanish allows access to a universal humanism that has historically been denied to Filipinos. It should not surprise us that this kind of liberal humanist sentiment would still be circulating in Hispanic Philippine letters in the 1930s. It should, indeed, surprise us if it *didn't* within a context in which Philippine national sovereignty was inching even closer to actualization. Nevertheless, such liberal humanism is adumbrated by multiple, and proliferating, racializing discourses that seek to organize and manage Filipino intra-racial difference via discourses of indigeneity and colonial disability. Thus, on the one hand, we see productive historically grounded and embodied articulations of a universalism that has discursively ignored the reality of how bodies are marked in the colonial situation. On the other, we can see how, what Kramer has called “imperial indigenisms,” hierarchize such potential racial re-orientations of European Man. The narrative device that makes this happen? The Filipina supercrip.

exaltarse.”<sup>10</sup> We will soon see that the narrative mechanism through which such a localization of Spanish takes place is through the racialization and gendering of colonial disability--the Filipina supercrip rhetorically takes on the task of this localizing gesture.

Reyes’s prefatory note emphasizes similar themes of his patron, Kalaw. Additionally, his note “al lector,” or to the reader, demonstrates the patriotic agenda that his Spanish novel seeks to promote:

Al lector,

En mi deseo de poder contribuir con mi granito de arena a la magna labor pro-patria en que todo ciudadano filipino que ama al país debe estar empeñado en el momento histórico actual de nuestra vida nacional, he escrito y publico esta novela.

Comprendo que, el acometer esta tarea de señalar y *poner el dedo en alguna de nuestras llagas sociales que minan la salud de la Patria*, estoy bogando contra la corriente. Harto deprimente es el símbolo del Siglo...se ahoga el Idealismo y se declaran en quiebra los Valores Espirituales...<sup>11</sup>

[To the reader,

In my desire to be able to contribute with my grain of sand to the monumental labor of affirming the motherland to which every Filipino citizen who loves their country should

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<sup>10</sup> Reyes, vii.

<sup>11</sup> Reyes, vi. My emphasis.

be dedicated in the contemporary historical moment of our national life, I have written and I publish this novel.

I understand that, upon accomplishing this task of signaling and *sticking my finger in some of the social wounds that debilitate the health of the Motherland*, I'm going against the current. A depressing exasperation is the symbol of the century... Idealism is drowned and Spiritual Values are declared bankrupt...]

In this note to his readers, Reyes considers his novel a small patriotic contribution to the national life of the Philippines. As explained briefly above, the early 1930s were a moment of historical transition for the Philippines as its political relationship to the United States changed from being an American territorial dependency to a commonwealth. For the Philippines, this meant that it would enter a “probationary period” of 10 years with the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act (1934), eventually becoming a supposedly sovereign territory. I ask the following general questions about the coincidence of moral health and Spanish linguistic capacities: How does Reyes’s novella fit within the political transition of colonial governmentality of the Philippines from a colonial dependent of the US to a semi-autonomous commonwealth? How do gender and race play into the nativizing of political sovereignty in the Philippines? What role does Spanish have in articulating a “pro-patria” message?

I suggest that Reyes’ novella writes within a Hispanic literary diagnostic genre, drawing upon its representational capacity and shifting its domain of possibilities, to rehabilitate the Philippine nation. In doing so, the novella attempts to represent the “*vida real*” [real life] of the Philippines so that readers can get an accurate portrait of the customs of the authentic Filipino

and Filipina. The novella orchestrates a cultural portrait of narrative vignettes designed to make normative pronouncements of how Philippine social reality *should* be by constellating gendered, racial nationalist tropes of motherhood, inheritance, paternity, and labor. Such an imaginary is marshalled through the realist prism of representational verosimilitude and, most importantly, authenticity. As indicated in its framing prefaces, Reyes' generic conventions enable a diagnosis of moral virtues and vices to be corrected as well as the portrayal of heterosexual family life, social mores, and economic representations all enveloped within a narrative vehicle of the rendering of "authentic" quotidian "customs" --a representational style whose generic literary referents are stylistically clear. It is the representations of customs that then help us to locate *Novela* formally within the realist sub-genre of *costumbrismo*. A form of literary production drawing on folkloristics and realist depictions of daily national life, *costumbrismo* derived from a Spanish impulse to represent the supposedly purely "authentic." *Costumbrista* literature is read within the rubric of realist representation that contradicts the Romanticist reproduction of art for art's sake. The trend against the literary aestheticism of Romanticism dovetails with the national project. The projection of authentic "tableaux" or authentic *retrato* [portraits] illustrates a documentarian gesture that "sought to define [itself] in opposition to outside or 'foreign' representations of Spain and the Philippines." In many ways this is a defensive genre articulated to undo the "disfigurement" of foreign influence. Nevertheless, the Philippines expanded and localized *costumbrista* portrayal of the Philippines during the late Spanish colonial period in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This localization saw the emergence of a distinctly Filipino literary repertoire dubbed "colonial *costumbrismo*."<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> John D. Blanco, *Frontier Constitutions: Christianity and Colonial Empire in the Nineteenth-Century Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 163.

Now while the realist/romanticist divide is a useful distinction to understand the diagnostic powers of Philippine costumbrismo, it actually doesn't quite capture the interventions that José Reyes' makes within it. Reyes is equally adept at infusing allegorical fantasy in order to re-orient reader expectations around gender, race, class, and sexuality. It is this space of allegory where we can read romanticized vistas of Filipino masculinity and femininity—vistas that demonstrate the racialized and gendered moral valences of the Spanish language. Queerly, the Spanish language becomes localized as one of the local customs to be preserved! Perhaps this should not be surprising given that it is a Hispanic realist genre that sees a Filipino authentic represented in Spanish. Nevertheless, the localization of Spanish, a historically elite language, runs contrary to the bucolic, provincial, and quotidian aspects central to the representational conventions of *costumbrismo*. Given the moral and political powers afforded to Philippine Spanish historically, it becomes inevitable that *Novela* would enact a pedagogical social function on its readership and the nation that it attempted to shape through *costumbrismo*. Such an ethnographic impulse becomes the vehicle for a moral didacticism that diagnoses problems and vices not on an individual or character-based level. Rather, we are meant to read such representations as allegories for the overall moral status and health of the Philippine republic.

The fear of degeneracy and impurity have been central instigators of the moral panics that have always connected racial projects with disability. For instance, Nirmala Erevelles writes that “eugenic science sought to stem the threat of degeneration by controlling the reproduction of those designated as “feble-minded.”<sup>13</sup> Feeble-mindedness emerged as a discursive terrain in which race in regimes of liberal capitalism became tied to gender normativity, able-bodiedness,

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<sup>13</sup> Nirmala Erevelles, “Race,” *Keywords for Disability Studies*, eds. Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 146.

reproductive futurity, moral fitness, and national health. Racialized configurations of the deficient mind “came to operate as an umbrella term that linked ethnicity, poverty, and gendered and racialized conceptions of immorality...based on...assumed shared “biological” inferiority...and reproductive incapacity to bear children that would assimilate into mainstream white society.”<sup>14</sup> Although she specifically reads the proliferation of discourses of eugenic science in American industrial capitalism, Erevelles’s connection of race to disability helps to make sense of the US-inflected liberal ideologies that prop up the narrative techniques of Reyes’s novella. Such readings, I suggest, obtain in the Philippines due to the proliferation of ethnological science ordering humanity via colonial racial hierarchies--a proliferation well documented in Philippine historiography.<sup>15</sup> I commit these Hispanic discussions of moral fitness as part of a conversation within what Robert McRuer dubs a “transnational crip theory” that I call “postcolonial cripistemology.” Never eschewing the importance of contextual crip theory within colonialism, I position “postcolonial cripistemology” first as a conversation between the Philippines and Fanon.

### *Postcolonial cripistemology*

Social realist Philippine fiction produced during the interwar period captures a flashpoint in which racializing discourses about differences in Filipina race, gender, sexuality, and ability

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>15</sup> Vicente Rafael, *White Love: and other events in Filipino History* (Durham: Duke UP, 2000); Paul Kramer, *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2006); Luis Francia, *A History of the Philippines: From Indios Bravos to Filipinos* (New York: Overlook Press, 2013); *Vestiges of War: The Philippine-American War and the Aftermath of an Imperial Dream, 1899-1999*, eds. Luis Francia and Angel Velasco Shaw (New York: NYU Press, 2002); *Positively No Filipinos Allowed: Building Communities and Discourse*, eds. Antonio T. Tiongson, Edgardo V. Gutierrez, and Ricardo V. Gutierrez, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006).

were shifting within the Philippines. These shifts correspond to mutable inventories of Philippine racial difference *within* the Philippines. I'm particularly interested in a prevalent juxtaposition between Philippine mestizo identity and Philippine indigenous or autochthonous racial identity. Focusing on literature in Philippine Spanish and the *ilustrado* conversation between Teodoro Kalaw and lesser-known Filipino author José Reyes, I examine how their work indexes the shifting commitments to Filipino mestizo embodiment as the exclusive holder of intellectual capacity. This reading demonstrates the way that mixed-race signifiers can be used to facilitate fiction as a diagnostic tool to assess the pathologies that plague a nation-state in political transition. Denise Cruz has demonstrated that in the Philippines of the 1920s and 1930s, political commitments were in flux with regards to the intersection of gender, race, and nationalism. She contends that authors like Máximo Kalaw, Felicidad Ocampo, Jose Reyes, and, I would add, Teodoro Kalaw (Máximo's brother) re-articulated the global proliferation of New Woman discourse in order to localize feminism and advance novel configurations of nationalism that would combine the new "transpacific Filipina" with Philippine indigeneity.<sup>16</sup> I frame this localization of seemingly Western figurations of gender, race, and sexuality within a meta-conversation between men around the declining capacity of Filipinos for the Spanish language and its connections to racial mixture. Mixed-race identity is, indeed, a fascinating terrain upon which to observe the ways that meanings of race and gender shift within spaces that are marked as Asian Creole. Here, again, I am referring to the mestizo intellectual cultures of the Philippines. I will be referencing this cultural and scholarly space as one in which we can begin the project of historicizing what I call postcolonial cognition.

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<sup>16</sup> Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham: Duke UP, 2012). p. 111-148.



Figure III.1 Cover of *Novela de la Vida Real*.

José Reyes' *Novela de la vida real* (1930) begins its narrative with a foundational juxtaposition of Philippine womanhood. Resonant with Reyes's project is the spectre of Rizal's iconic María Clara whose pure monastic mestiza femininity continues to inform even contemporary constructions of the Filipina.<sup>17</sup> *Novela* was written some forty years after *Noli Me Tangere* (1887). Readers can thus observe a racial shift in understandings of gender relations that diverges from also aligns with Rizal. *Novela* postulates two idealized forms of Filipina femininity whose

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<sup>17</sup> Denise Cruz, *Transpacific Femininities: The Making of the Modern Filipina* (Durham: Duke UP, 2012); Neferti Tadiar, *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization* (Durham: Duke UP, 2009).



representations are the structuring motif of Reyes' eighteen vignettes. Protagonizing the “vicios [and] inclinaciones malas” and the “virtudes humanas” of Philippine society are the Filipinas Anisia and Ángela, pictured above within a bucolic tropical landscape in traditional feminine garb. Anisia is indigenous. Or rather, her appearance is described as “una belleza típicamente filipina.” Reyes through his narrative is invested in the construction of a typical Filipina beauty who possesses a “cuerpo esbelto y rostro ovalado de tez morena...[con] cabellera larga, ondulante y negra como el ébano.” She is brown (tez morena or “brown complexion”); Reyes goes to great lengths indigenizing Anisia vis-a-vis her feminine foil, Ángela: “Ángela era una beldad medio amestizada.” The shift that the reader can note is that the mestizo characteristics of Ángela are rendered as “menos atractiva que la otra” or less attractive than those of Anisia.<sup>18</sup> This rearticulates the trope of María Clara to a kind of autochthonous and indigenous Filipina racial embodiment that diverges from the discourse of mestizaje that the Philippine Enlightenment tacitly endorsed.

Historical anthropologist Deirdre de la Cruz has offered an analysis of the syncretic mechanisms through which marian apparitions in the Philippines found literary articulation in the localized troping of the *Inang Bayan* (Motherland). Through an analysis of textual evidence, mostly in the form of Filipino poetry, *sinakulo* and *komedya*, she tracks the shifting allegorical dynamics of material relationality as the Philippines transitioned from Spanish colonialism to the American imperial epoch. She similarly tracks the ways in which such localizing discourse communities through mestizo or “indio” Filipino poetics uses maternal allegory (through the twinning of *Inang Bayan* and Mary) to make sense of mutable colonial power and re-articulations of the Philippine nation. She claims that *Inang Bayan* is a pivotal “mother figure”

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<sup>18</sup> José Reyes, *Novela de la vida real* (1930), 1.

through which narrative techniques in poetics and comedy staged and restaged, actively shaped and subtly transfigured social and political commitments to the national project--the revolutionary late 19<sup>th</sup> century registers of which obtained as sedition under US colonial control.

Maternal allegory usefully demonstrates the constitution of the Philippine national project through gender norms shaped by duty, heteronormativity, and traditional femininity. *Novela* demonstrates another cultural and historical vector in which *Inang Bayan* subtends the gendered characterizations of Reyes' dual antithetical femininities. Given this backdrop we can observe that through these Anisia and Ángela, Reyes elaborates two distinct trajectories for the Philippine nation represented in the normative family and written through the pathologies and virtues of Filipina femininity. Anisia, the normative embodiment of Filipina virtue, shores up the Philippine nation through the gendered labor of motherhood. She is, indeed, the embodiment of the titular vignette "una madre modelo."<sup>19</sup> She is the romantic and ideal wife for Mario.

So ideal is Mario and Anisia's lives together, "en posesión de todo cuanto el hombre puede [sic] apetecer en el mundo," that colonial disability is narrativized as inevitable destiny: "La ley de compensación, sin embargo, que rige en todos los órdenes de la vida, hizo que un día cayese enfermo el menor de sus hijos," which, naturally, "llenaba de pesadumbre el corazón de la madre." With Dickensian flair, Anisia's "instinto maternal" is rendered preternaturally exceptional given that she is charged with the sickly child's care. So, of course, the "foundational romance," to borrow from Doris Somer,<sup>20</sup> sees the idealized heterosexual pair composed of the industrious Mario and the model of motherhood, Anisia, diverting resources to the treatment of

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 4-5.

<sup>20</sup> Doris Somer, *Foundational Fictions* (1994).

an illness “[que] seguía su curso alamante, agravándose cada vez más.”<sup>21</sup> Indeed, so dedicated and all-encompassing was Anisia’s care that it imperils her own health:

Tantas noches pasadas de vela, junto al lecho del hijo enfermo, acabaron por quebrantar la salud de Anisia, cayéndo [sic] enferma a su vez. Pero enferma y todo, y no obstante contar con nodrizas y enfermeras, y con el cariño paternal y no menos solícito de su marido y de sus padres, que, en vano la advertían del peligro que corría su salud, convenciéndola de la necesidad de evitar aquellos desvelos que atrofiaban su organismo, no quiso apartarse jamás ni un momento del hijo idolatrado. Al fin, quiso el cielo escuchar los ruegos y premiar la dulce abnegación y sacrificio heroico de la madre, devolviendo la salud al hijo querido.<sup>22</sup>

[The many nights spent by candlelight at the sick child’s bedside resulted in the diminishment of Anisia’s health, falling ill herself. Despite her illness, and with the help of nursemaids and nurses, and with the paternal care and even the solicitous affection of her husband and parents, who, in vain warned her of how her health was jeopardized, convincing her of the necessity to avoid those sleepless nights that decayed her body [atrophied her organism], she absolutely refused to be parted even a moment from her beloved son. Finally, she entreated the heavens to hear her cries and to reward the sweet abnegation and heroic sacrifice of the mother, returning health to her beloved child.]

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<sup>21</sup> Reyes, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 6.

Model motherhood is a complete surrender of health and well being for the future of the nation. Filipinas are certainly represented as the more debilitated sex; however, the acute impairments of sacrificial motherhood is rendered a strength. Feminine sentimentality, emotionality, tenderness, and the labor of care are configured as important forms of bodily work whose physical realities debilitate the body. So profound is Anisia's maternal illness that despite her "constitución fuerte y vigorosa...llegó a padecer de clorosis, con insomnios...que degeneró después en consunción." Tuberculosis is the final diagnosis for which "las eminencias médicas...las inyecciones y tónicos" were in vain. Anisia's idealized indigenous body goes through a drastic change to the point where "estaba completamente desconocida." No longer was she "la esbelta y encantadora mujer de antes." She was no longer the slim and enchanting womanly figure that the reader comes to know just a few pages prior. The draining and debilitating labor of maternity is quickly narrativized via disability tropes of inspirational and all-encompassing care that even threatens the potential erotic appeal of the Filipina. Anisia becomes a pitiable sight "[que] daba lástima contemplar ... su perfil macilento y sombrío, su figura melancólica y triste." Observers remark that such a sickly sight seems contrary to her class. Indeed, "mentira parece que esa señora se halle tan consumida, viviendo como vive en medio de tanta opulencia."<sup>23</sup>

—Sabes por qué está así? —Replicó el marido—Pues, sencillamente, por ser una madre modelo, quien, toda amor y ternura, y abnegación y solicitud para con sus hijos, quiso poner siempre por encima de todo, de su propio bienestar y aún con grave riesgo de su vida, la salud y la felicidad de esos a quienes llama ella sangre de su corazón, pedazos de

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 6.

su alma...quien con su acendrado amor de madre, con una tiernísima solicitud rayana en heroísmo, arrebató ella de las garras de una muerte inminente.<sup>24</sup>

[—You know why she’s like this? —Replied the husband—well, quite simply, because she is a model mother who, with all love and tenderness and abnegation and solicitude for her children, wanted to always place above all else, above her own health even with serious risk to her life, the health and happiness of those she called the blood of her heart, pieces of her soul...who with her pure motherly love, with an extremely tender dedication bordering on heroism, she snatched from the claws of an imminent death.]

Ángela, on the other hand, represents the pathological anxieties around Filipina betrayal of the family structure and the reproductive logic of Filipino nationhood. Reyes’ social realism is articulated through the potentiality of betrayal of the Filipina to the nation. Although the Filipina is marginal to the historical articulation of the intellectual tradition which Reyes’ novel is a part, they constitute the pivotal abject desiderata normed for the sake of the Filipino nation. Prescribed in *Novela* is a desire for a strong, economically vibrant Philippines through the articulation of a colonial nationalist form of normativity that disciplines the Filipina body in service of heteroproductive and normative notions of the Filipino family.

Reyes positions Anisia and Ángela as racial and class foils of one another displaying the differences that cleave Filipino racial imaginaries. Anisia is described racially with “una belleza típicamente filipina”: “Poseía un alma de flor y parecía una bella ninfa del valle con su cuerpo esbelto y rostro ovalado de tez morena, con sus ojos hermosos, grandes y soñadores, de

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 7.

expresión dulcísima” [“A typical Filipina beauty...she possessed the soul of a flower and seemed like a beautiful nymph of the valley with her thin body and oval face with a dark complexion”]. Countering and emphasizing the natural “typical Filipina” beauty of Anisia is Ángela “[que] era una beldad medio amestizada” [“was a belle with mestiza features”].<sup>25</sup> Ángela is also described as having a certain “aire de presunción y altivez” conflating her phenotypic representation with an inflated ego that aligns with her mestiza identification. Reyes’ novel attempts to stabilize a notion of racial and national identification that simultaneously affirms, attends, and reconciles Filipino multiraciality through a gendered imaginary that oscillates between normative and pathological femininities. Both characters’ exposition, whether as boon or perfidy to the nation, hinges partly on their dis/identification with motherhood: “dios castiga a la mujer que ahoga en su seno el germen de la futura generación. Y nada hay ciertamente, más valeroso, más bello, más romántico en el mundo, que la maternidad” [“God punishes the woman who drowns within her womb the seed of future generations. And there is nothing, certainly, more courageous, more beautiful, more romantic in the world than motherhood”].<sup>26</sup> Motherhood then stands as the principal institution through which Filipinas are integrated into the national imaginary. Following Deirdre de la Cruz’s analysis of maternal and Marian allegory within the Philippine national project, we can view Reyes’ construction of Filipina narrative archetypes as following a similar allegorical function.<sup>27</sup> In this case, however, such Filipina femininities as placed in service not only for the reproductive capacities as mothers but also are litmus tests through which overall national health is measured. Deviation from the ideal of Filipina motherhood

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<sup>25</sup> Reyes, 1.

<sup>26</sup> Reyes, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Deirdre de la Cruz, *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015)

marks a danger to be managed for the overall stability of the heteroproductive nation. Reyes elaborates the function of this institution through his “madre modelo,” Anisia.

While writing about Philippine revolutionary poetics, “dreams also figure prominently in the unfinished cycle of dramas” at the turn of the twentieth century according.<sup>28</sup> The modeling of *Inang Bayan* exists in dialectical relationship to the reshaping of bucolic laboring masculinities in Reyes’ work. Such reshaping transpires in an *ilustrado* dreamscape.

“*Un sueño providencial*”

While the projection of model Filipina motherhood is a central tension revisited several times throughout the novel, Filipino masculinity is also reshaped within the political economic landscape explored as a fundamental aspect of the moral diagnosis and conditioning of the Philippine national body in *Novela*. While it is womanhood and motherhood that are the central vectors through which Hispanic culture becomes a localized referent, Filipino laboring masculinity is reconfigured through a discursive re-shifting of the modes of production whereby proletarian Filipinos are put to “good use” in order to disidentify with the hacienda cultures central to mestizo enlightenments of previous epochs.

The chapter titled “Un sueño providencial” (a “providential” or fated dream) represents a radical shift of tone and genre of the *costumbrista* novel that had, up until its sixteenth chapter, focused on domestic scenes located in the normatively envisioned Filipino home. “Sueño” shifts the social realism of the novel to the *campo* and enmeshes it in the dreams of *campesino* Juan de la Cruz, “peregrino errante en brazos del Azar” [“errant pilgrim in the arms of Chance”]. De la Cruz slumbers in a rustic scene at dusk directionless, void of ambition, and trapped in the “arms

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<sup>28</sup> De la Cruz, *Mother Figured* (2015), 69.

of Chance.” De la Cruz could be read as a flawed variety of indolent masculinity that will only hurt the economic and social development of the nation. However, the picture is more complicated as De la Cruz was once an “aparcerero honrado y laborioso,” an honorable and hardworking sharecropper that became a “víctima de las ambiciones de Gregorio Villamar, su patrono, quien en sus buenos tiempos estuvo explotándole durante muchos años, hasta que, por una larga serie de vicisitudes adversas, la dorada medianía de Juan trocóse en una vida en sombras, agobiada por la escasez y las privaciones” [“victim of the ambitions of Gregorio Villamar, his employer, who in his lucrative times was exploiting him for many years, until, through a long series of unfortunate events Juan’s life was cast in shadows, exhausted by scarcity and privations”].<sup>29</sup> And now we find Juan depressed and directionless because of the wonton ambition of the *hacendado* Villamar. De la Cruz is figured as a wasted resource that could be put to better use by the Philippine nation state--a figuration that offers not only a critique of *campesino* indolence but also an implicit critique of the economic exploitation of a *hacendado* class.<sup>30</sup> Wherever the locus of his critique may fall, Reyes’ narrative corrects the socially

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<sup>29</sup> Reyes, 66.

<sup>30</sup> I attempt to understand a representation of the Philippines under political economic transition from a hacienda-style order prevalent among political mestizo elite to a political discourse of economic social mobility imported during US colonial rule. I should state that the United States is never explicitly mentioned in Reyes’s novella. However, I think that we can reasonably make the connection between the declination of one political economic system under Spanish colonialism and the transition to another US political ideology around economic mobility in the space of Reyes’ novel because of coeval economic developments transpiring in the early twentieth century across both Kalaw’s and Reyes’s cultural production: a US settler colonialist-inspired agricolonial encomienda system in Muslim Mindanao. This transnational economic agricultural hub relied on the use of indigenous Muslim labor. Specifically, the US and Philippines intersect in economic interests through the hyperextraction of surplus value from indigenous Filipinos in Mindanao. To substantiate these connections I will now turn to archival evidence garnered from some of the Bureau for Non-Christian Tribes’ financial, rather than conventionally ethnological, investments in Philippine indigenous populations during the early 20th century as a way to inform readings of indigenous disability in Kalaw and Reyes’s



engineered flaws in this masculinity to make de la Cruz a productive agrarian laborer for the nation.



Figure III.2 An illustration featuring Juan de la Cruz.



Figure III.3 Juan takes up the plow again

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collaboration. The “indicatively female” at the heart of able-nationalism is what interests me. This section will transition into a reading of the foundational femininities of José Reyes’ text: the titular Anisia and Angela. Following this reading will be a discussion of the Filipina supercrip’s authorial convalescence.

As de la Cruz slumbers and does not work the land as his social location should dictate, his mind is flooded by a “voice” that is expressed as an exhortation not only to him but also to the Philippine nation. The exhortation spans three pages of the text and is illuminating as it is knowledge that is not native to Juan de la Cruz but is delivered through “la región misteriosa de los sueños” [“the mysterious realm of dreams”].<sup>31</sup> Within “the mysterious region of dreams” the Rizalian realism of the texts shifts radically from that which was championed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to one that is prophetic of the fantastical elements of magical realist texts. Reyes’ exhortation is too long to quote here in its entirety. It is clear, however, the role of the “campo” or countryside of the Philippines is crucial for overall national economic health and well-being: “Echad mano del arado y de la azada! Cultivad nuestras vastas heredades! El campo, la madre tierra os espera con los brazos abiertos para brindaros sus frutos...El trabajo honrado, el trabajo del campo regado con el sudor del labriego es una labor sagrada, que trae consigo prosperidad y bienestar” [“With plow and hoe in hand cultivate our vast lands. The countryside, mother earth awaits you with open arms to offer you her fruits...honest work of the field irrigated with the sweat of the laborer is sacred work that brings with it prosperity and well being”].<sup>32</sup>

The feminization of the land as a provider of “frutos” (“la madre tierra”) through the masculine work emblemized by the “plow” and the “hoe” represent a divine destiny of the economic fate of the Philippines to be fruitful and productive. The narrative suggests divinity, that this message is from God, but really it’s from Reyes himself and endorsed by bourgeois intellectuals like Kalaw. Thus, couched in the optimistic context of a “nueva era económica” in the Philippines, Reyes’ narrative becomes a prescribed norm for a productive laboring masculine

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<sup>31</sup> Reyes, 67.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 68.

body.<sup>33</sup> This becomes evident as De la Cruz awakens from his slumber so compelled by the moral rhetoric that suffused his dreams that he begins to work and till the land like a good *campesino*: “Verdad o fantasía, realidad o quimera, aquellas palabras impresionaron tanto y tan hondamente su espíritu, que en aquel mismo instante... empuñ[ó] de nuevo la azada y cultiv[ó] la tierra de sus antepasados” [“truth or fantasy, reality or myth, those words made such lasting impression on his spirit that in that very moment... he grasped his hoe, cultivating the land of his ancestors again.”]<sup>34</sup>

“El sueño providencial” could be read as the narratives that populate bourgeois imaginaries of how *campesinos* should serve the national body. I suggest that this scene illustrates a facet of a cultural apparatus that sought to norm particular masculinities to extract surplus value for a nation-state that sought inclusion in global economic regimes. A myth or “quimera” of Filipino masculinity is represented in the text to facilitate the surplus required for the economic mobility and evolution of the Filipino polity. The downtrodden *campesino* wholly convinced by the moral certitude of the intellectual elite puts his body at bourgeois disposal. However, given the material realities of bourgeois agribusiness development in the Philippines, particularly in the fertile regions of Davao and other parts of Muslim Mindanao, we can read “El sueño providencial” of Juan de la Cruz in a different light. What might be the epistemological and political connections of a *costumbrista* text endorsed by bourgeois intellectuals that represents agribusiness colonialism in provincial Philippines?

Teodoro Kalaw was a member of the intellectual and political elite of Manila as well as a key figure in the nativizing Philippine government particularly as Manuel Quezon’s secretary,

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

floor leader of the first Philippine Assembly, and active member of an international Filipino diplomatic delegation that visited countries all over the world as evidenced in his extensive such compelling works as *Hacia la Tierra del Zar* (1908). Kalaw would have been in a powerful political position to oversee many of the economic developments in Mindanao with multinational agribusiness investment as can be observed in Bureau documents contemporaneously dated to Kalaw's work as well as Reyes'. In this socio-economic context it makes sense that Kalaw would endorse texts like Reyes' that would promote particular kinds of social and economic norms for a racialized gendered imaginary of Filipino nationalism – norms that would underwrite a transnational economic policy that invited Japanese, American and Manila based corporate entities to “cultivate our vast lands.”<sup>35</sup> The various intellectual and cultural projects that sought to norm Filipino/a multiracial difference along the lines of a putative gender binary should not be imagined outside schemes of transnational racial capitalism. Although, the material and cultural expressions of racialized gender in the Philippines should neither be imagined as wholly constituted by capital. Rather, the cultural imaginaries that produced and managed Filipina/o difference, I suggest, can be thought of as techniques of governmentality that marked bodies as suited for particular types of intellectual and material labors all in service of a solidified and stable Filipino nationality.

The “providential” imaginary that is crafted in the text mobilizes divine knowledge to situate masculinity and the campesinos it marks as sites of knowledge production and productive labor for the state. Foundational masculinities, one of the *quimeras* of Kalaw's *Ciencia del estado*, facilitate representational ruptures wherein the Real, or in Reyes' text, *Providencia*, materially relate modes of production. The modes of production of global racial capitalism and

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 69.

the social dimensions of difference it articulates undergird capitalist expansion and its constitution of Philippine sovereignty. *Novela* and the centrality of figures like Juan de la Cruz can be made to reference what Fredric Jameson alludes to as the paradox that constitutes the unrepresentability of the Real.<sup>36</sup>

We can capture this “Real” by the ways in which the narrative presentation of Filipina femininities and masculinities index the embattled relationship of culture to political economy. Through Kalaw’s juxtaposition of Filipina femininities, articulated at the intersection of shifting understandings of race in the Philippines—mixed-race depravity and indigenous purity— we observe *Novela* as inviting us into domestic “foundational” heterosexual romances that shape the readers understanding of the future of the Philippine nation. This racially bifurcated vista of gender is also imbricated in a national heteronormative conditioning of Filipino marital relations, which not only implicates procreation as imperative but also, through normative motherhood and patriarchy, solidifies a uniquely American middle-class pathway of social mobility for the Philippine national subject. To begin, however, I suggest we look at the end of the novel to understand how the projection of an Americanized socio-economy as embedded within a re-inscription of ilustrado patrimony. In the chapter following the overt domestication of indigenous labor in service of the nation, “El dedo en la llaga” [“salt in the wound” or more literally, “A finger in the wound”] furnishes an extended and rousing tertulia on the economic future of Philippines. The prospects seem dim according to Don Mario:

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<sup>36</sup> Frederic Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 81-82.

—En Filipinas abundan proyectos, hermosos y optimistas, muchos de los cuales, sin embargo, se malogran y no llegan a convertirse en realidad, por falta de acción y de acometividad eficaz, tenacidad y perseverancia.<sup>37</sup>

[In the Philippines beautiful and optimistic projects abound, many of which, nevertheless, fail and do not become reality, because of inaction, effective enterprise, tenacity and perseverance.]

My thinking on this statement irrevocably brings me back to the homosocial conversation across time between ilustrado men. The previous chapter featured a similar tertulia a “la mesa filipina” in the bowels of the Japanese gunboat, the Hong-Kong Maru, where erudite Filipino statesmen discuss “las tristezas de la patria.” This tertulia occurs in the “auspicious” beginning of agricultural development in the Philippines under US colonial rule. Such agricolonial investment and its cultural manifestation in this novel through the domestication of the generic fulano “Juan de la Cruz” shouldn’t surprise, as Kalaw (recall that he prefaces the novel as a helpful diagnostic device) gives glowing and ringing endorsements of similar agricultural developments in Taiwan under Japanese rule. Don Mario’s words, then, are uttered within a political economic context in which the Philippines’ racial-sexual-gender management of particular kinds of Filipina/o bodies to perform certain kinds of Filipina/o labor has intensified of the previous three decades before the publication of *Novela de la vida real*. Now I want to center a different kind of conversation between doctor and patient.

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<sup>37</sup> Reyes, 71.

*The Filipina Supercrip*

El Doctor. —Siempre escribiendo!

Rosarito. —(Levanta los ojos, ruborosa y tímida.) ¿Qué quiere usted que haga? Es mi ocupación favorita. Además, escribiendo, llego a olvidarme de que realmente estoy enferma...

El Doctor.—Pero si usted ya no está enferma. Lo que usted tiene ahora es...

Rosarito.—¿Qué es?

El Doctor.—“Mielitis.”

Anisia [madre de Rosarito].—Y qué es mielitis?

El Doctor.—(Con acento solemne y picaresco.)—Romanticismo, señora.

Todos sonríen.

[The Doctor.—[You’re] always writing!

Rosario.—(raising her eyes, blushing and she.) What would you have me do? It’s my favorite pastime. Besides, writing I begin to forget that I’m actually sick...

Doctor.—But if you have become better suddenly. What you have now is...

Rosario.—What is it?

Doctor.—“Mielitis”

Anissa.—And what is mielitis?

Doctor.—(With a solemn and mischievous accent.)—Romanticism, madam.

Everyone smiles.]

*Novela*'s final, and most telling, vignette brings into conversation discourses around colonial disability, femininity, and the preservation of Spanish in the Philippines. Anisia's daughter, Rosarito, is bed-ridden and hospitalized. The scene titled "La convaleciente" or "the convalescent" brings the reader into the space of institutionalized medicine: "Era en la sala cuatro del Hospital General, en una de esas celdas donde la soledad es oprimente, y profundo el silencio en las horas nocturnales. Rosarito, una bella hija de Anisia, paciente de la institución, linda joven trigueña de dieciocho abriles, rasgaba nerviosa con la pluma-fuente sobre la nítida blancura de unas cuartillas impolutas."<sup>38</sup> Rosarito's illness restricts her to the bed of her "celda." The oppressiveness (oprimente) of her solitude, the writer instructs us, inspires a nervous scribbling (rasgaba) of her pluma-fuente. Represented for us is a compelling portrait of sickly femininity dedicated to the craft of the writing of or, perhaps, upon "unas cuartillas impolutas." The portrayal of the "pluma-fuente" as the device of choice represents the young sick poet in a particularly romantic register. Imagine if in your convalescence with what we later come to find is "consumption," an illness whose virality spreads throughout Reyes's vignettes imperiling the novella's heroines, you are struck by a wave of inspiration more acute than the symptoms of your sickness. What might be more striking than the intersection of bodily illness, acute impairment, and metered prose is the romanticization that is advanced not solely through the disablement of inspiration (or the inspiration of disablement) but also through the racialization of gender. The impairment and youthful mastery of the joven trigueña possess a rehabilitative protocol. The above lines furnish a powerful racial corrective to the masculinist teleologies of Philippine Enlightenment, which have sacralized the mestizo ilustrado as the progenitor of the Hispanic letters. It should therefore surprise and intrigue that it is a "trigueña" and therefore

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<sup>38</sup> Reyes, 54.



indigenized Filipina who wields the “pluma-fuente” of the Philippine Enlightenment. Reyes sets into relief the feminized racial type of the Filipina trigueña upon the “nítida blancura” of her prose. Figuratively, the “cuartillas” upon which Rosarito composes her poems are literally white: “la nítida blancura de unas cuartillas impolutas.”<sup>39</sup> A “clear” whiteness of “untainted cuartetas.” I should note that *cuartilla* could have two possible meanings. In this context both make sense. “Cuartilla” is a colloquial term for “hoja de papel” or a sheet of paper. However, a more ancient meaning according to *Diccionario de la Academia Española* a “cuartilla” can refer to “una estrofa de cuatro versos” or more deliberately “una combinación métrica que consta de cuatro versos octosílabos, de los cuales asonantan el segundo y el último” [“a metric combination that contains four octosyllabic verses, of which the second and the last assonate”]. Given the hispanophilia that suffuses the romantic portrait of the dark-skinned (trigueña) poetisa, we shouldn’t underestimate the portrayal of antique rhyming verse in the style of “redondilla.” Lest the anticipation overwhelm, part of the Doctor’s prescription for Rosarito’s “mielitis” is more poetry!

From her bed, surrounded by a bevy of nurses, her doctor, and Anisia, Rosarito “con labios enjoyados de sonrisa” [with jewele-colored smiling lips] recites the saccharine:

Es la vida un perfume  
En la edad de las pasiones  
Dulce edad bella y florida  
En que triunfa la esperanza [...]  
[Life is a perfume  
In the age of passion

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 54.

A sweet and florid age

In which hope triumphs [...]]

Following the impromptu recital, the Doctor exclaims: “Perfectísimamente. Si usted continúa cultivando las letras, llegará a ser una notabilidad algún día.” [Absolutely, perfect. If you continue cultivating the word, you will become noteworthy one day.]

The Doctor also gives his intertextual ode to “la nurse”:

Sencilla y humilde, como esa tímida flor que oculta su perfume entre el silencio de los altos muros, cuando el deber la llama y la coloca junto al lecho de dolor de los que sufren, prodigándoles el bálsamo espiritual de su ternura y solicitud, la nurse, con su albo traje y nívea toca graciosamente prendida sobre su cabecita, cual blanca y enorme mariposa, es dulcemente seductora.

Pero también, en los paréntesis de ensueño a que tan bella y discretamente sabe ella entregarse de cuando en cuando, es ferviente devota de lo bello y lo sublime, y su alma, sedienta de luz, se abre como un capullo a la expansión. ... fué [sic] para nosotros una revelación del alma delicada y paradójica de estas modernas hijas del presente, que llenan humildemente una necesidad social, con su noble y humanitaria misión.<sup>40</sup>

[Modest and humble, like the shy flower that hides her scent within the silence of these tall walls, when duty calls her and places her at the bedside of pain of those who suffer, bestowing them with the spiritual succor of her tenderness and solicitude, the nurse, with

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 59-60.

her white uniform and snow-white headdress graciously placed upon her little head, as a white enormous butterfly, is sweetly seductive.

But also, within the parentheses of daydream where she so beautifully and discretely ventures from time to time, she is a fervent devotee of the beautiful and the sublime, and her soul, thirsty for light, opens up like an expanding cocoon...for us it was a revelation of the delicate and paradoxical soul of these modern girls of the moment, who humbly fulfill a social need, with they noble and humanitarian mission.]

Catherine Ceniza Choy argues in her book *Empire of Care* that the “Filipina nurse” is a pivotal form of racial and gendered labor that demonstrates the articulation of US imperialism as a form of benevolent assimilation. Amazingly, we see this figure here in Spanish letters. Although Choy’s study focuses on post-1948 US-Philippine relations which saw the proliferation of American-trained nurses to the United States, the Doctor’s ode to “la nurse” presages this feminization of medical care work. Indeed, it is in the invocation of the anglicized “la nurse” rather than the consistent use of “enfermera” or “nodriza” that is curious. This demonstrates the extent to which Reyes’s writing on “local” forms of Filipino subjectivity and culture scenes bear the mark of American colonialism. In this sense, such local, authentic portraits of Philippine life, while having the effect of localizing Spanish as a Philippine language also represents one permutation of Philippine-American literature. This demonstrates that extent to which Spanish literatures were in conversation with US imperial policy, which shaped the poetical and thematic structure and representation of care and impairment in Hispanic Philippine writing. Spanish writing responded, integrated, and managed the influences of US empire in its preservationist protocols integral to colonial disability.

The “nítida blanca” [“sharp whiteness”] that suffuses Rosarito’s writerly ethos multiplies in the scene with religious appointments: “Todo allí daba la impresión de lo blanco, con la blanca eucarística de los lirios, con la nitidez opalina de los mármoles helenos. Una imagen de la Dolorosa colocada a la vera de la cama inspiraba ideas piadosas de unción y misticismo” [Everything gave the impression of whiteness, with the Eucharistic whiteness of the lilies, the clear opaline of the helennic marble. An image of Virgen of Sorrows (lit. the “painful one”) placed at the edge of the bed inspired pious ideas of devotion and mysticism.”<sup>41</sup> Amidst the “whiteness” “escribía la enferma...erguía su cuerpo gentil, retorcido por el quejido, una bella figura escultural de hierática virgen venusina, sibarítica en su semi-desnudez y abandono” [the sickly girl would write...straightening her elegant body, which writhed with each moan, a beautiful scultural figure of an inscrutable Venusian virgin, lavish (sybaritic) in her quasi-nakedness and abandonment.”<sup>42</sup> The presence of the “Dolorosa” invokes Mary, the Virgin of Sorrows, possesses the function making “holy” the convalescence of Rosarito. Such a theological reference accentuates the innocence and purity of the figure of Rosarito meant to help readers make sense of a “trigueña” poetess Filipina as weilder of “pluma-fuente,” a role more historically ascribed to the mestizo ilustrado. I suggest that this marks an instance where the Spanish language is “localized” to a more authentic Philippine indigenous context. The subject at the center of the Hispanic Philippines is not the male anti-colonial ilustrado. Rather it’s the “mulatta” Filipina who continues to write amidst a pure “eucharistic” and “opaline” “whiteness” despite her illness. The Doctor in the scene diagnoses her with “mielitis,” whose root is “miel,” meant to evoke the “Venusian” “virginal” quality of sweetness of her “sybaritic” “delicate”

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<sup>41</sup> Reyes, 54.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 54-55.

(gentil) yet sickly body that dedicates itself to the act of writing Spanish poetry, flirtatiously translating his saccharine diagnosis as “Romanticism.” This moment at once harkens back to a time in the Philippines’ national past wherein the literary acumen of the *ilustrados* provoked nationalist revolutionary zeal, even as it conjures the “trigueña” Filipina as the bearer of an optimistic future that secures Philippine haute culture. Rosario’s erotic divinity yet pious purity casts the act of Hispanic writing as that of beatific inspiration; indeed, she is “una bella figura escultural de hierática virgen venusina” [a beautiful sculptural figure of a priestly venusian virgin].

The term “trigueña” connotes a swarthy, olive-skinned complexion. Nevertheless, the unmistakable connotations of “mulatto” and “mix-raced” are also apt translations of the term. “La trigueña” Rosarito, taking after her mother, embodies the indigenous characteristics through which authentic Filipina identity is articulated, advancing the foundational feminine juxtaposition that began the novel between the mestiza Ángela and Anisia. Recall that Ángela is the “beldad media amestizada” that displays some of the “malas inclinaciones” and questionable morals that Reyes’s didactic novel is meant to correct. Meanwhile, Anisia is the “pure” Filipina whose indigenous characteristics are configured as more authentically Filipina—she does not form part of the elite hacendado culture that has corrupted national life.

I argue that this novel gets around the elitism and class hierarchy that attaches to the Spanish language by localizing the language, affixing the mixed-race “trigueña” as one of the vanguards and preservers of “las bellas letras hispánicas.” This mixed-race, indigenously inflected Filipina reproduces Spanish literary excellence in the hospital:

Aquella especie de veladita amena, improvisada en pleno hospital, gracias al entusiasmo y buen humor de aquellos amantes del sonoro idioma cervantino, terminó entre demostraciones cariñosas y recíprocas de afabilidad exquisita, mientras se daba de alta en la institución a la gentil convaleciente, a Rosarito la bella cultivadora de las letras hispanas.<sup>43</sup>

[That kind of pleasant candlelight, improvised right in the middle of the hospital, thanks to the enthusiasm and cheerfulness of those lovers of the sonorous Cervantian language, expired between the affectionate and reciprocal demonstrations of exquisite affability, and while, within the institution [the hospital] they praised the elegant convalescent, Rosarito, the beautiful cultivator of the Hispanic letters.]

Rosarito is the Filipina supercrip who in her convalescence undertakes the noble mission of cultivating the “Hispanic letters,” rehabilitating the cultural deficit of the enlightened language in the Philippines.

The kind of supercrip discourse deployed in this scene is articulated at the intersection of indigeneity counterposed to mestizo enlightenment. I suggest this as the historiographic and, indeed, hagiographic arbiters of the Spanish language and Hispanic cultura alta are the mestizo ilustrados. Scholars have long understood Philippine enlightenment cultures, anti-colonial thought, and even Filipino insurrección as all embedded within a racialized and, indeed,

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 60.

patriarchal mestizo, or “creole,” cultural nationalism.<sup>44</sup> Literary scholar Sami Schalk has interrogated the critical uptake and take-down of the term “supercrip” in disability studies literature. Schalk contends that we must “trace the intellectual and linguistic” origins of the supercrip. A likely origin of the supercrip discourse is early twentieth century representations of the blind whose apparent ability to be productive citizens changed perceptions around the capabilities of the blind to contribute to society. Indeed, the fact that they could do “normal” activities like hold a job, go to school, etc., is rendered superhuman and awe-inspiring. To wit, Schalk references Garland-Thomson's well-known analyses on discourses of freakery and enfreakment in the late 19th century. She argues that “wonder” was secularized in modernity such that discourses of disability accompanies those of enfreakment.

A large part of disability studies' critique of the supercrip is related to the general dis-ease with the troping of disabled bodies as inspirational. Critical research on the figure of the supercrip has seen scholars of disability invest in the politics of representation. Representational research has demonstrated the extent to which social values assigned to bodily variation through cultural production is emblematic of how social, historical, and political processes *produce* disability from bodily variation. That is not to say that bodily variation and the realities of the body are inert. Indeed, feminist disability studies scholarship has demonstrated the extent to which the phenomenology of pain is a productive line of inquiry revising the identity-based

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<sup>44</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Press, 2006); Megan Thomas, *Orientalists, Propagandists, Ilustrados: Filipino Scholarship and the End of Spanish Colonialism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012); Resil Mojares, *Brains of the Nation: Pedro Paterno, T.H. Pardo de Tavera, Isabelo de Los Reyes, and the Production of Modern Knowledge* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila Press, 2006).

narratives promoted by the social model for disability.<sup>45</sup> This connects to supercrip discourses, which narrates the triumph over pain and infirmity as a hallmark for individual responsibility. According to scholars like Kafer, disability is individualized to avoid social reality. Personal responsibility trumps a social ethics of care and accommodation. Nevertheless, Schalk “want[s] to build on the work of other scholars to emphasize the need to understand supercrip as a narrative that actively constructs a recognizable stereotype through various mechanisms” (76). Indeed, supercrip narratives can be both empowering and disempowering. They have the power to give disabled people needed representational space; however, they can also reinforce problematic and damaging stereotypes of disabled bodies and their inherent capacity to overcome their limitations. Schalk further writes: “It is important to distinguish the difference between the underlying assumptions present in the production of supercrip narratives and how audience members actually interpret and understand these representations (76). Schalk’s framework is engaged in theorizing reception of ableist narratives and the extent to which ableist ideology is co-constituted through consumption and production of culture. Indeed, what is useful about Schalk’s analysis is that there is a negotiation between disabled readers and narratives about them. Not always is the triumph over impairment a supercrip narrative that is harmful to disabled people. This mitigating kind of reading is useful for the representation of convalescent femininity and its resignification of Philippine Hispanic letters.

On the one hand, we have a clear example of the supercrip as cultivating and maintaining the Hispanic Letters, which according to Kalaw’s preface are in decline. On the other, I agree with Schalk’s complication of the supercrip as always already oppressive as this scene has the potential to re-signify who we imagine is an illustrated erudite Filipino. Nevertheless, we must

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<sup>45</sup> Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer, Crip* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 2013).



understand this portrayal, I suggest, within the context of illness, deficit, and decline that Kalaw and Reyes present for us. Must we surrender the hagiography of Philippine Enlightenment protracting Hispanic Modernity into the 20<sup>th</sup> century through an alignment of illness, precarity, and gendered divisions of labor with the Filipina body? Must the Filipina body, in its potentiality to resignify Hispanic cultures in the Philippines, be exposed to pathogen, waste, and at once be the recipients and purveyors of care? Recall that accompanying Rosarito's verses is the Doctor's "la nurse."

Here the trigueña's resignification represents a shift in gender and racial discourses within this re-articulation of the Philippine Enlightenment. The Philippine Enlightenment's historiography has consisted of all but the beatification of mestizo elite. This has aligned a particularized form of mestizaje discourse with Philippine nationalist autonomy. The articulation and protraction of Spanish letters via a masculinist postcolonialism that has thematized the mestizo ilustrado as the sovereign intellectual of anticolonial thought is a foundational narrative of Philippine cognitive independence. What I mean by "cognitive independence" as narrative concerns the construction and remembrance of intellectual culture in national history. What many historians term the "national period" in Philippine history articulates "nationalist consciousness" through the recognition of the intellectual ability of Filipinos to produce knowledge and coherent claims on behalf of the national body. Political sovereignty relies on the cognitive ability of the colonized mind to re-interpret the Western sign system that deems national independence, sovereignty, and autonomy meaningful endeavors. For the Philippines, much of the reinterpretation of sovereign sign systems, which installed the Philippines within the liberal genealogies of coherent nationhood are localized as anticolonial theories for the Southeast Asian nation *in Spanish*. Spanish was the linguistic system that facilitated access to European

genealogies that reshaped the contours of Philippine creole identity as both access to the political vocabularies of European liberal republicanism *and* an indigenizing discourse that advanced the ilustrado as representative of the national body. American colonial rule demonstrates underexamined shifts in the postcolonial masculinist register of Philippine ilustrado discourse. The intersection of gender and indigeneity reoriented the political intellectual commitments germane to late-19<sup>th</sup> century discourses on cognitive independence. Supercrip analytics in disability studies aid us in understanding the intersectionality of postcolonial enlightenment. In *Novela*, the twinning of dutiful indigenized maternal care and its progeny results in a very different kind of Hispanic heroine: the convalescent trigueña. This recasts feminine debility as an inspirational trope that at once shows how Hispanism is an endangered species but also dramatizes its maintenance through the poetical acumen displayed by a body that one would not connote as possessing or having a stake in Hispanic modernity.

What we see in *Novela* is an economic program that draws heavily on American narratives of upward social mobility, pluralistic democracy, and respectability that comes with proper economic stability—all of which is secured through hard work, savvy investment, and indigenous authenticity. Given the shifting political and economic context in which Kalaw was writing--a shift to political semi-autonomy after three decades of colonial control--we should not be surprised that *Novela* juxtaposes the indigenous productive laborer with the *trigueña* poet. The creation of a “saludable” national life of the Philippines, as well as the political and moral justification for eventual sovereignty maps itself in elite cultural production. The endorsement from Kalaw, a towering statesman in the Philippine republic, articulates *Novela* to a socio-political context wherein the question of sovereignty was at the forefront in political discussion. What interests me here is how we can map the connection between moral landscape of Hispanic

cultural production with political economic developments transpiring coevally. Connecting the gendered and racializing anxieties around the maintenance of Spanish in the Philippines with coeval economic developments in agriculture allows us to make sense of the deployment of “indigenizing” discourses in the novel. We see an effort to localize Spanish as a distinctly and authentically Filipino cultural expression by making the *trigueña convaleciente* speak it.

Colonial mimicry is the process through which the colonized imitate and take on the culture of the colonizers. Fanon is one of the most famous critics of the process of cultural assimilation in colonial rule. Drawing on Fanon, Homi Bhabha describes this process at length detailing how mimicry can arise as a colonial tactic stemming from the desire of the colonizer for a “reformed” Other. Fanon is suggestive in this regard as the colonizer also desires a “deformed” Other. Reformation through deformation is a form of control where the colonial other can attain some form of recognition but through a colonial difference that is “almost the same, but not quite.” Bhabha calls this a “metonym of presence” meaning the colonized subjects’ apparent sameness only even demonstrates their difference.<sup>46</sup> This functions similarly to the tropes commonly deployed in narrative prosthesis in which a disabled character may attain some level of recognition through demonstrating the ability to perform tasks that the able-bodied take for granted. This is what Tobin Siebers articulates as a mimetic corporeality. He writes that “[d]isabled bodies provide a particularly strong example of embodiment as mimesis because they resist standard ideas about the body and push back when confronted by language that would try to misrepresent their realism.” Or, alternatively, the prosthesis of disability invests also in the performance of superhuman tasks that an able-body would not even deem conceivable. However,

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<sup>46</sup> Bhabha (2005).

such “supercrip” inspiration-narration only serves to solidify the Other’s difference from an able-bodied norm. This additionally accretes myriad clusters of assumptions around what bodies should normatively look like, which has been called the “normate” by several disability theorists.

In the Philippines, representations of failed colonial mimicry become a tactic whereby Filipina women engage in mimesis so painfully failing that they can only be made sense of through disability. I’d summarize the previous in the following way: the Maria Claras of the Philippines are just colonial crips while the ilustrados are the supercrips. Denise Cruz has productively demonstrated, although implicitly, the failures of mimicry in Philippine nationalist fiction. She writes that José Rizal's "Maria Clara was a tragic and beautiful mestiza, the illegitimate, fair-skinned daughter of a Spanish friar and an *india*, a woman native to the Philippines. As the love interest of the male hero, Crisóstomo Ibarra, she remains steadfastly and sacrificially loyal, even through *grave illness*, accusations of betrayal by her lover, and relentless pursuit by a lecherous friar. In the book's closing pages, she is rejected by Ibarra and confined to a convent, where she faces unspeakable violations.”<sup>47</sup> This deployment of the trope of mestiza femininity is confined by tactical alignments to "grave illness" and imminent rape. Her body is subject to violation because her compromised heritage of “india” and “Spanish” makes *her* a violation. There is a way that mestizaje obtains in the sphere of femininity as a perversion that it does not for the largely mestizo-led Philippine Enlightenment. José Rizal thoughtfully and perniciously uses the body of Filipina mestiza to compound the gendered perils of sexual violence and the impurities of racial-gendered mixed-race to forge a nationalist anticlericalism. These anticolonial anticlerical discourses use a crip native woman, in this case Maria Clara, as a scapegoat and an object of pity. This parallel and simultaneous alignment of Filipina-ness with

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<sup>47</sup> Denise Cruz, 2.

illness diagnoses the moral failings of the Catholic governing order by punishing, narratively speaking, the illegitimate product of Spanish sexual turpitude (the mestiza) and in order to present a figure to be saved by masculinist mestizo nationalism. The mestizo becomes the anticlerical patriot and thus puts Hispanic secular enlightenment to good use. The mestiza submits herself to a convent and thus "faces unspeakable violations."<sup>48</sup> Crisóstomo Ibarra's rejection of Maria Clara amounts to a rejection of mestiza femininity by the Philippine Enlightenment writ large as a character whose skin is "blanca, demasiado blanca tal vez."<sup>49</sup> Of course, this absents the ilustrado's own compromised and mixed heritage. It is precisely the alignment of mixed heritage with disability that produces the Filipina. Maria Clara as "the epitome of virtuous Filipina femininity" is absolutely the product of the crippling of femininity through a racialization that the ilustrado happily and strategically avoids. She is a prosthetic whereby the ilustrado's racialization does not result in impairment ("grave illness," "unspeakable violations") but rather results in the corroboration of capacity through the masculinization of intellectual nationalism. I reiterate: mestiza Filipinas are colonial crips that serve as prosthetic devices securing the masculinism of the Filipino "native intellectual." By extension, I suggest, that the fluency of the native intellectual with Western paradigms of representation in which disability is a foundational axis of difference evokes the ilustrados as colonial supercrips vis-à-vis the postcolonial phenomena of colonial mimicry.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>49</sup> José Rizal, *Noli Me Tangere* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008 [1887]).

#### Chapter IV Femme Asias in Miguel Syjuco's *Ilustrado: a novel*

“Y tuvo razón, porque la verdad adelgaza, y no quiebra, y siempre anda sobre la mentira, como el aceite sobre el agua.” Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *El ingenioso hidalgo don Quixote de la Mancha*

“My friends and I in Europe had dubbed ourselves the New Ilustrados – The New Enlightened, taking on the yoke of revolution as our fee for our material advantages.”

- from *Autoplagiarist* (page 1982), by Crispin Salvador.

#### *Queer Diasporas, or, towards a world-ing of queer theory*

One of the hallmark critiques of queer of color theory has been the move towards problematizing U.S.-centric biases of queer studies. Such a transnational move marks the understanding that the liberatory potential of “queer” cannot be divorced from social and geopolitical context.<sup>1</sup> In essence, queerness cannot wholly be the theoretical and political idiom

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<sup>1</sup> While the transnational commitments of queer of color critique are uneven – geographic tendencies that I epistemologically position myself against – some of the notable “canonical” texts of this field include Roderick Ferguson’s *Aberrations in Black: Toward a Queer of Color Critique* (2003), Siobhan Somerville’s *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (2000), and *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (1999). More recent texts in the field produced under the auspices of a “critical ethnic studies” project include Chandan Reddy’s *Freedom with Violence: Race, Sexuality, and the U.S. State* (2011), Nayan Shah’s *Stranger Intimacy: Contesting Race, Sexuality, and the Law in the North American West* (2012), and Jasbir Puar’s *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (2007) –

of Western cosmopolitan subjectivity; however, if it is just that, then queer theory should be invested in exploring the parameters and horizons of its own thinkability in a transnational scope. Such transnational and queer border thinking allows for an analytical accounting of sites and texts that are multiply inflected by Spanish and American imperial projects. This brand of border theory has been theorized in Filipino Studies as a “queer diasporic reading practice” that accounts for the plural forms of address that postcolonial texts routinely materialize across multiple borders, through diverse contact zones, and across polysemous realms of linguistic experience.<sup>2</sup> Such transnational moves characteristic of queer diasporas studies are, in part, a response to the assimilative and effacing technologies of empire. For example, critiques of U.S. exceptionalist discourses that imagine American foreign policy over the past century as a form of “benevolent assimilation” strive for reparative reading practices that would archive the various forms of dislocation that empire inaugurates.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, “queer diasporas” offers a “scavenger methodology” that responds to the kinds of epistemic omissions empire relies upon to maintain its own coherence and moral rationalization. This form of diasporic queer of color critique offers

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the latter two being much more transnational in reach and scope. Since queer of color theories are of relatively recent coinage, their theoretical lineage to woman of color feminisms should always be emphasized: Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987), Audre Lorde’s *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (1984), Cathy Cohen’s “Punks, Bulldaggers, and Welfare Queens: The Radical Potential of Queer Politics” (1997). The preceding is certainly not an exhaustive list. The literature review that follows tracks the transnational interventions of “queer diasporas.”

<sup>2</sup> Ponce, 2012.

<sup>3</sup> For more on the critique of U.S. imperial “benevolence” and the legal contortions of creating American nationals (with American passports!) that are still foreign domestically, see Vicente Rafael’s *White Love and Other Events in Filipino History* (2000), Paul Kramer’s *The Blood of Government: Race, Empire, the United States and the Philippines* (2006), Rick Baldoz’s *Third Asiatic Invasion* (2013), and Amy Kaplan’s classic *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of U.S. Culture* (2005). Sarita See also has a wonderful close reading of the flawed legal acrobatics that justified the logic of producing Filipino U.S. nationals who were nevertheless “foreign in a domestic sense” in her introductory chapter to *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance* (2009).

a critical lens through which “impossible subjects” become coherent themselves.<sup>4</sup> However, I am suspicious of overly romanticizing queer of color critique or queer diasporas as an epistemological salve that will coherentize the queer subjects as outside or beyond the nation. I am mindful of the incoherences that such liberal recuperative epistemologies can inspire themselves given their normally immutable geopolitical, linguistic, and material location. Nonetheless, such analytics productively respond to the cultures of compulsive omission that structure global knowledge. Such omissions epistemologically manifest within, however, an unwillingness, however unintentional, to expand cultural and theoretical paradigms to other arenas where U.S. imperialism has delimited and, at once, actually *encouraged* the growth of vibrant intellectual and cultural production. This is, of course, not to characterize the moral atrocities of U.S. imperial statecraft as ambiguous, rather, it is to caution that a recuperative reading methodology can efface many global contexts in its insistence on U.S. domestic framings of queerness. In the context of American imperial ideology, Sarita Echavez See theorizes such compulsive opacity as a form of “double disarticulation;” we often forget that we forget about empire and its possessions.<sup>5</sup> However, I would caution that even in our theoretical moves to stitch together those objects, texts, histories, or subjectivities that imperial projects decompose, our insistence on such liberal modes of recuperation as a mode of critique can replicate the very invisibilizing technologies we seek to challenge.

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<sup>4</sup> Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 8. Gopinath’s “queer diasporic reading practice” is perhaps the most emblematic of a recuperative reading practice meant to find those subjects that are rendered illegible by heteropatriarchal national projects. This is similar to Joe Ponce’s queer diasporic analytic that reads cultural production in the Philippines for its multiple addressees given the polymorphic context that such cultural projects originate.

<sup>5</sup> Sarita See, *The Decolonized Eye: Filipino American Art and Performance*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).



The disarticulative power of empire is not limited to those privileged subjects who through social location or political convenience neglect to remember that they forgot about colonialism in the Philippines. Even in our efforts to historically reconstruct the impositions that Spanish, American and Japanese imperialisms have wrought in the Philippines, we often repeat the kinds of omissions empire structures into our epistemologies. Emphasizing the stakes of imperial forgetting, Dylan Rodríguez has notably cited the perennial failure of the cultural project “Filipino America” as a result of those Filipino Americans’ political inability to contend with the genocidal “epochal violences” of American imperial statecraft and white supremacy.<sup>6</sup> Instead, cultural performances of what David Palumbo-Liu calls an “eccentrically ethnic subject” serve as a form of multicultural visibility that effaces more than it actually substantively reveals about the history of the United States in the Philippines.<sup>7</sup> For Rodríguez such cultural performances come in the form of “Pilipino Cultural Nights” (PCNs), or similar “Asian Fests,” that affirm cultural heritage at the expense of rigorous historical exploration of the United States’ relationship with Asia. In a similar way, Palumbo-Liu critiques some minority fiction that presents a racial protagonist whose end-goal is uncritical assimilation into proper American subjectivity – a stock narrative of Americanization as a form of “ethnic healing” for the benefit of a white readership. In a more methodologically transnational and field reflexive scope, we can observe similar forms of “double disarticulation” critiqued in Joseph Martin Ponce’s *Beyond the Nation* where Anglophone Filipino writing *in the Philippines* enabled by the incursion of American imperialism is colonized and erased by the very critical operations of Filipino American Studies--a field of inquiry that has privileged Anglophone writing by Filipinos *in the*

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<sup>6</sup> Dylan Rodríguez, *Suspended Apocalypse: White Supremacy, Genocide, and the Filipino Condition*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

<sup>7</sup> David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier*, (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999).

*United States*.<sup>8</sup> Put simply, Anglophone writing from the Philippines is not visible in the Filipino American “canon” or consistently used as objects of analysis in Filipino American scholarship beyond *Dogeaters* or Carlos Bulosan. By the same token, we can observe in postcolonial literature that reflects upon the historical convulsions of anticolonialism that similar elisions occur. I examine such a disarticulative process in Miguel Syjuco’s *Ilustrado: a novel* whose epistemic inspiration is late 19<sup>th</sup> century Filipino *ilustrados*. The liberal recuperation of an idealized historical period narrativized by Syjuco simultaneously avows the presence of queer cultural and historical forms of Filipino subjectivity *and* disciplines them to uphold a masculinist anti-feminine/feminist notion of nationalist canonicity. These epistemic slippages between the normative national subject and the disciplined queer other produce imperial forgetting – slippages that constitute the very horizon of thinkability in literary and scholarly projects of recuperation, representation, and restoration. While this project seeks to critique the imperial modes of forgetting replicated in the literary historiography of *Ilustrado*, it also takes seriously the productive forms of queer eruptions that Miguel Syjuco’s novel enacts in Filipino American studies and domestic forms of queer (of color) theory.

In the present analysis I examine Miguel Syjuco’s *Ilustrado: a novel* to assess the ways in which diasporic Filipino fiction can become a historical conduit that cites Filipino revolutionary literature through a continuation of its Enlightenment legacy. I argue that the novel’s self-conscious and anxious reassertion of heteromascularity through its intellectual protagonist (Miguel) leverages the enlightenment patrimony of the Philippine nationalist bibliography to postulate Filipino literature as a global literature worthy of international readership. Put simply, the use of the figure of “ilustrado” commoditizes Filipino intellectual history to encourage a

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<sup>8</sup> Ponce, 2012.

broader readership of our literature. However, my analysis demonstrates that the globality of Filipino cultural production (what the novel calls a Filipino “weltlitteratur”) is inevitably a masculinist technology that articulates postcolonial racial identity as normatively straight, bourgeois, and “transparent”<sup>9</sup> – an acerbically anti-queer and anti-feminist form of canonicity that relies on a cognitive division of intellectual labor delineated by the historical figure of the *ilustrado*.

The novel’s title, “ilustrado,” is an unambiguous reference to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century scholastic movement of the Propagandists – an intellectual movement of bourgeois Filipinos in Europe and the Philippines, whose work is considered canon and part of the postcolonial patrimony of the nation. Syjuco’s narrative is presented as a literary form of historiography that marshals together a fictional bibliography of texts, which intentionally resonate in nationalist narratives of Filipino intellectual emancipation. Intellectual emancipation, indeed, is the driving force of *Ilustrado*’s plot. Miguel, the protagonist, searches for answers surrounding his mentor’s death, Crispin Narciso Lupas Salvador, the “panther” of Philippine *belles lettres*. His investigation coincides with the search for Salvador’s messianic masterpiece, *The Bridges Ablaze*, which will presumably save the Philippines from political corruption and, more importantly, its own literary obscurity. Miguel’s own intellectual liberation through the work of his mentor and the nationalist resonance of *Ilustrado*’s textual canon becomes tethered to the enlightenment of the Philippine nation. The story’s complex exposition is told over multiple

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<sup>9</sup> Intellectual “transparency” is a term that I borrow from Denise Ferreira da Silva’s critique of the Enlightenment, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (2007). In it Da Silva argues that the rational interior of European Enlightenment discourse could only articulate a transparent subject as the embodiment of Reason through the discursive, scientific, and philosophical production of an “affectable” exterior. In short, a transparent subject only has the powers of Reason if He has an affectable other subjected to these powers. Other theorists might theorize this process of intellectual colonization by another name: racialization.

periods of Filipino history composed from the fictional curriculum vitae of both protagonist and mentor. Such a vibrant textual canon sets the stage wherein the paradigm drama between mentor and mentee invites a readerly engagement with Filipino history and literature. This literary historiography resonates with the Philippines' own literary anticolonial canon clarified by the epistemic impetus of the novel: the "ilustrado." This impetus scaffolds the perceived need of a visible and unified Filipino literature amidst and because of the Philippines' complex colonial history and diasporic inclination – a unity bibliographically manifest in *Bridges Ablaze*. In fact, it is the diasporic dislocation of the author and by extension the expatriate intellectuals of the Philippine Enlightenment, which rationalizes the need for a unified global literature and perhaps more importantly, a "return" to wholeness. Stunningly it is the Filipino diaspora that precipitates national unity through global literature. Indeed, the protagonist returns to the Philippines to begin his search. Ultimately, Miguel performs an intellectual and spiritual border crossing into a fictional Philippine island ("La Isla Dulcinea") to uncover his master's work. I argue that it is the diaspora that facilitates the protracted diffusion of the Philippine Enlightenment in cultural production and that it is the masculinist figure of the "ilustrado" that is the seat of psychic investment of national and intellectual purity and normativity.

In a broader theoretical sense, I seek to understand where the Filipino diaspora fits in such intellectual lineages of Enlightenment thought where diaspora is actually that which is "straight" to the "queer" nation. This expands the logics of "queer diasporas" that theoretically excavate a reading practice that assumes a structurally queer relationship between a supposedly derivative, queer diaspora to a normative, "pure" nation-state. The stakes of such a project are to globalize our queer theories to be more inclusive of other kinds of queer epistemologies. Furthermore, I seek to broaden queer of color theory's arena of inquiry to understand race more

acutely in a postcolonial and anti-imperial context. I take seriously Jasbir Puar's injunction to queer diasporic thought that she deems is always seeking "to enact the elaboration of a transgressive agential queer diasporic subject."<sup>10</sup> Here Puar is referring to the reading practices that recode "alternative modernities" through the recuperation of queer subjects that are not pathological. Such aspirational reading hermeneutics re-theorize reading to re-script bodies that might not signify as gay, lesbian, transgender, or otherwise, but rearticulates the texts in which these bodies appear in a new sign system that we call "queer diaspora." In reading the dissidence of the "turbaned body" in biopolitical networks of regulation post-9-11 she states that she is "not interested in reading the turbaned body as a queer body or queering the turbaned body" by virtue of the disruptions that it enacts on the security state. She instead reads it as an "assemblage, a move...to both expand the expectations and assumptions of queer reading practices (descriptive and prescriptive) and to unsettle the long-standing theorizations of heteronormative frames of reference for the nation."<sup>11</sup> I take Puar's injunction as a caution to queer and queer of color theory's own potentially damaging regulation of transnational queerness, which becomes ever more urgent in the process of composing transnational projects that attempt to make other modes of queerness signify in other sign systems.

I ultimately argue that postcolonial border thinking must be a feminist project to counteract the inevitable patriarchal inclination of what Latin Americanist Ramón Grosfoguel critiques as "postcolonial fundamentalism," stemming from the pervasiveness of Euramerican knowledge projects.<sup>12</sup> In *Ilustrado*, diasporic return to a homeland is the form of postcolonial fundamentalist thought that is transformed into a normalizing device by evacuating extant forms

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<sup>10</sup> Puar, 174.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 174.

<sup>12</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel, "Transmodernity, border thinking, and global coloniality: Decolonizing political economy and postcolonial studies," *Eurozine*, 2001, pp 1-23.

of queerness as actually “too native,” and therefore undeserving of being part of the project of canonization. The possibility of the “ilustrado” as the epistemic center of a global Filipino literature is ensured by the “impossibility” of the queer subjects that at once enable and endanger Philippine Enlightenment’s seductive hold on nationalist historiography. What does a novel that tracks a heteromale diasporic intellectual’s experiences of queerness in the homeland add to a framework of queer diasporas? Additionally, what sorts of critiques can queer diasporas postulate of protracted modern projects of Western Enlightenment that form the historical basis of anticolonial and postcolonial nation building projects in the Global South? Finally, can queerness in the homeland ever be autochthonous when “home” is always already under the imposition of imperialism? Might the diaspora always be home in that sense?

*Femme Asias: Enlightened Genealogies and Queer Kinships*

Miguel Syjuco’s *Ilustrado* “begins with a body” – the body of the protagonist’s graduate school mentor, Crispin Narciso Lupas Salvador. Floating in the Hudson River, the body, “open to a virginal dawn,” gives the impression of a transnational detective noir where the protagonist’s sleuthing to determine the circumstances of Salvador’s suspicious death is also a journey towards his idealized enlightenment – an enlightenment that becomes closely tied to the enlightenment of the Philippine nation.<sup>13</sup> Miguel is an acolyte of Salvador who in the world of *Ilustrado* is the lion of Philippine letters. As his disciple and dutiful graduate student, the protagonist, Miguel, is the only one that suspects foul play in Salvador’s supposed suicide. However, in a surprising turn of events, rather than investigate the circumstances of Salvador’s death in New York (where it

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<sup>13</sup> Miguel Syjuco, *Ilustrado: a novel*, (London: Picador, 2010), 1.

actually happened), Miguel returns to the Philippines. It is the return of this prodigal son that demonstrates the entanglements of Philippine Enlightenment discourses and diasporic imaginaries. And “son” is not an accidental or metaphorical etiquette by which I characterize Miguel; rather, I seek to understand how the semi-autobiographical protagonist is articulated as an heir apparent of the intellectual tradition of what has been labeled the “Philippine Enlightenment.” I theorize the diasporic vantage from which the openly heterosexual Syjuco engineers his narrative as constituting the Filipino diaspora through the canonization of a masculinist intellectual tradition invested in the figure of the “*ilustrado*” (enlightened). The backdrop of the intellectual and cultural patrimony that Miguel resuscitates in his narrative is a vibrant queer cultural production – specifically, bad queer poetry. Bad queer poetics seems to substantiate the need for the enlightening paternalism of the *ilustrado*. One might ask why the author would seek to represent queer aesthetics at all in a novel about the *ilustrado* – a question that I will return to in great detail below. I suggest that to make historical knowledge about the Philippines is always already to make sexual knowledge about it as well as demonstrating that the intellectual investment in the modern epistemologies of the Enlightenment is also a libidinal investment in the figure of the *ilustrado*.

Such a diasporic imaginary is articulated through the fiction that Syjuco expertly constructs embodied in the striking yet ultimately counterfeit verisimilitude of the fictional Salvador. Our Salvador (Savior), martyred and splayed “Christ-like” to a New York skyline, alludes to the impossibility of the novel’s almost singular mission: to uncover his masterwork, *The Bridges Ablaze*. The search for answers about Salvador’s death and his posthumous masterpiece that would rehearse the “romantic bullshit” that was postulated in the revolutionary *Noli Me Tangere* (the national novel of the Philippines) buttresses a steadfast faith in the

revolutionary potential of literature.<sup>14</sup> *Ilustrado*'s narrative is sourced from various works from Salvador and Miguel's largely fictional vita, which drive the plot. Their work forms the intellectual basis, or "foundational fiction," for *Ilustrado*, although such intellectualism undoubtedly finds its historical provenance in the scholastic achievements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Filipino *ilustrados* whose Propagandist Movement allegedly inspired the Philippine Revolution. Indeed, the reader sees the Philippines from various historical and fictional vistas: the seedy detective fiction of *Manila Noir* set in what appears to be a 1950s monochromatic Manila; Salvador's *Autoplagiarist*, a "2,572-page...memoir that refracted through his life's story a history of the Philippines from the start of the Second World War to the end of the millennium;" *The Enlightened*, a novel "[a]bout [Salvador's] grandfather's role in the 1896 Philippine Revolution" based curiously on the life of Rizal's own Crisóstomo Ibarra, perhaps the most famous Filipino literary character; Syjuco's intercalated biography, *Eight Lives Lived*, detailing the life of his mentor; and multiple interviews, short stories, poems, diatribes, and folkloric satires painting a complex portrait of the Philippines' most famous intellectual embodied in Salvador.<sup>15</sup> In addition to narrating the expected *bildungen* of the protagonist's intellectual awakening, which we will come to find is wrapped up in his anxious reassertions of his heteronormativity, the reader finds something quite unexpected: the consolidation of a bibliographic canon whose organizing logic is the figure of the *ilustrado* – what I theorize as a Rizalian hermeneutic of literary historiography.

It should come as no surprise given the breadth of the canon that is postulated in *Ilustrado* that the various narrative threads and arcs of Syjuco's work are necessarily fragmented.

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<sup>14</sup> Syjuco, 205.

<sup>15</sup> Syjuco, 13, 8.



The pursuit of *Bridges* is at once to position the Philippines as awaiting the pristine knowledge of self-actualization that it represents, and to demonstrate how this knowledge has been diluted by the multiple colonial histories that conditioned the not-so-stable enunciation of a Filipino identity. I see the fractures in Philippine historical experience in *Ilustrado* as rationalizing the need and substantiating the diasporic desire of Miguel to find *Bridges* to cure the dismemberment performed by the fragmentary historical time articulated in the novel. The reader's experience of the text is then cumbersome and vexed to demonstrate that the literal endeavor of interfacing with *Ilustrado* (and by extension Filipino history) is a performative act that strains the rhetorical powers of resolution and linearity. Thus, the novel's postmodern style actually fits well with the narrative of the Philippines' own progress toward modernization, or what Resil B. Mojares has described as the trick of colonialism's incorporation of "native subjects into a world-system." This incorporation transpires by virtue of the construction of a coherent Philippine literature. That is, colonialism produces national subjects that can represent the nation as a coherent enterprise for inclusion into global politics and world literature. We can at once extol the virtues of anticolonial intellectual movements as well as critique the inscription of an intellectual class as part of the telos of imperial statecraft.<sup>16</sup> Mojares' insight on literary incorporation is instructive for reading *Ilustrado*, as it is a novel about Filipinos' purgatorial wait for a text and epistemology that is paradoxically immanent and yet eternally deferred; the receipt of such unfettered knowledge remains brilliantly unresolved at the novel's end, demonstrating the paradox that is Filipino world-making. The thesis of *Ilustrado* then is to reflect on this journey towards incorporation of Filipino literature into a global project of "*Weltliteratur*" or world literature. That is, the goal of the diasporic subject is "to world" or to globalize Filipino

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<sup>16</sup> Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* is instructive here, particularly his chapter "On National Culture."

cultural production. However, in order to find integration we “must write, and write justly” and we should cease to “make things new, [but rather] make them whole.”<sup>17</sup> This is a remarkable synthetic enterprise as it is the fragmentation instantiated by diaspora that articulates the multilingual, polyphonic, and polysemous national canon into coherence.

Philippine historical polyphony and global visibility are summarized thusly: “[A]s a nation we’re overly concerned with the past. Even engaged in the present we lean slightly backward as time forces us forward. We’re like a *probinsyano* learning English.”<sup>18</sup> Filipinos, therefore, while obsessively married to the past cannot articulate an accurate or robust postcoloniality because we lack vocabulary and it is this lack of vocabulary that desynchronizes us. Syjuco avers “perhaps we have stopped ourselves from being invented, from self-realization, by blaming others for our wordlessness...that we wallow in the fact that we, as a people, are not yet whole.”<sup>19</sup> Lamenting the state of diasporic writing and lack of “wholeness,” Salvador critiques the current global project of Filipino representation:

Our problem is that we’ve written one book, and it’s been re-bound again and again. So many re-presentations of the war, the struggle of the haves and have-nots, People Power Revolutions on Edsa, whatever. All those Pinoy writers industriously criticizing. All those critics tirelessly writing. About unsuccessful 1970s rebellions, 1990s domestic dramas. Or the Filipino-Americans, eagerly roosting in pigeonholes, writing about the cultural losses that come with being raised in a foreign country, or being not only brown, but a woman, and a lesbian, or half-blind, or lower-middle-class, or what ever. Oh my, what a crime against humanity that the world doesn’t read Filipino writing! This is

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<sup>17</sup> Syjuco, 208-209.

<sup>18</sup> Syjuco, 206.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

the tradition you will inherit....We [only] realize ourselves in someone else's words.<sup>20</sup>

Identity politics is a problem. Or rather, the complex technologies that mark human difference and inform Filipino subjectivities are a problem. Therefore, social reality is a problem. The confederating project of a Philippine "*weltliteratur*" requires a universalizing discourse of Filipino unity that would dislodge *the* national writing subject from the minoritizing logics of "brown," "woman," "lesbian," "half-blind," "Filipino-American," or "lower-middle-class."

*Ilustrado*, the novel and historical figure, are produced through the historical and discursive formation of the Filipino diaspora. The pursuit of making the Filipino "whole" cannot be separated from contemporary and historical realities of fragmentation produced via networks of migration, the historical precedent of intellectual expatriation, and political exile. It is an axiomatic arc in Philippine history that Filipinos had to go abroad (specifically, to Spain, Germany, France, England, Japan, and even Russia) in order to discover what a Filipino actually was.<sup>21</sup> The narrative, indeed, not only moves back and forth in time but also through space, weaving multiple stories in diverse geopolitical and historical contexts, to illustrate the persistent impossibility of notions of stability and fixity in *Ilustrado*. As stated above, rather than investigate the death of Salvador in New York, where it happened, the novel's narrative beckons its readers to return to the Philippines. A return to the homeland conjures the need to not only make whole the story of Salvador's suspected murder but also to rectify the schisms that cleave diasporic subjectivity and erstwhile national belonging. The novel mimics the vertiginous array

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 206-7.

<sup>21</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Under Three Flags*, (New York: Verso, 2005). I have discovered the existence of Filipinos on the steps of the Kremlin! For more see Teodoro Kalaw's conspicuously titled *Hacia la tierra del Zar* (1908). The early twentieth century travel diary (translated as "Towards the land of the Czar") details Kalaw's and the first president of the Philippine Commonwealth, Manuel Quezon's diplomatic trip to Moscow in the early twentieth century.

of experiences of space and time that constitute diasporic experience; for the Filipino intellectual expatriate this means accessing Filipino history, literature, and belonging through multiple access points strewn throughout various narratives – a fragmentation resolved through a performative array of archival practices that induce the reader to believe in the promise of wholeness in reading and writing Literature, the promise of canon stability. In *Ilustrado* we can observe an array of archival acts, bibliographic formations, and textual excavations that productively canonize diasporic experience as one paradigmatic, though not exhaustive, form of Filipino being. In the section that follows I analyze how the *ilustrado* as the figural and epistemic organization of Filipino literary world-making is actually transformed into a circuit through which alternative networks of filiation and kinship thrive. Because of the complexities of representation inherent in the project of rendering diasporic and national belonging for the consolidation of world or global Philippine literature, the question of who gets to speak for the Philippines is a necessarily anxious and queer affair.

Channeling a fictional critic lambasting his behemoth historical memoir *Autoplagiarist*, Salvador's work is described as possessing an "Oedipal impulse [that] was so ambrosial, [Salvador] fucked his father and killed his mother."<sup>22</sup> To its credit, Syjuco's *Ilustrado* problematizes the very category of "*ilustrado*" with the suspected queerness of the ones who occupy it. Ultimately, however, he evacuates queerness from enlightenment through the reassertion of his own heteromascularity and by intentionally excising queer embodiments from the story of the Philippine nation. However, I first call attention to the kinds of queer movements that *Ilustrado* makes in articulating a stable narrative around Philippine Enlightenment. Such queer moments in the text speak to the ways in which diaspora is the queer space of

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 13.

Enlightenment and thus marks *Ilustrado* as a productive queer diasporic text that participates in many of the rhetorical and methodological strategies concretized by “queer diasporas.” It seems that Miguel (as protagonist and author) knows that there is something queer about the Enlightenment, although such moments of queer recognition are sometimes fleeting and subtle. For instance, during Miguel’s investigations he interviews Salvador’s sister, Lena, who looks like “Crispin [Salvador] in drag.”<sup>23</sup> Lena makes various appearances throughout Syjuco’s narrative and is consistently derided as a figure of comic relief that points to the decrepit, unsustainable, and corrupt way of life that characterizes the Filipino upper class. Indeed, Lena’s posh lifestyle and characterization as a dim-witted socialite is the inevitable outcome of the politically corrupt materialist culture that Salvador’s mythic masterwork would seek to critique. The contrast of Miguel’s mentor’s politically astute observations and stellar fictional bibliography with a sister who is “Crispin in drag” should not go unremarked. Lena becomes emblematic of the types of bodies and knowledges that are excised from the historiography and epistemology that are representative of the *ilustrado*. The paths that such epistemological excisions follow are articulated through a matrix of gender and sexuality pathologized in the figure of a “Crispin in drag.” However, there is a moment of pristine clarity in the midst of some of Lena’s nonsensical and non sequitur dialogue with Miguel. Shortly before his death, Salvador visited his sister, Lena:

For how long was he here?

I had nothing at all to fear. He was my baby brother.

No, I said, how long was he here?

I’m sorry?

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 90.

How long was he queer? I couldn't resist.

I see. Less than a week.

That long? I'm trying to keep a straight face."<sup>24</sup>

One might wonder: what is it that Miguel actually wants to know? It would seem on the surface that he wants to know how long Crispin stayed with his sister. Although we might read the comic break in the dialogue as simply a moment of levity during a hard conversation, I suggest that Miguel knows that there is something queer about the Philippine Enlightenment – a queerness from which Miguel seeks absolution. This queerness, by the author's own avowal, is routed and rooted in spatial and temporal dislocation; indeed, how long *was* he queer?

Time for the Filipino is always already queer. The queerness of the Enlightenment is a matter of temporality as well as spatiality. The narrative weaves fiction and fantasy with "reality" leaping backward and forward through time, queering the temporality through which a stable Filipino history or subjectivity can be articulated. Some of the most telling scenes involve posthumously rendered conversations between Salvador and Syjuco where we can get a sense of the parameters of the "avuncular" relationship between the two "ilustrados." "Avuncular" being the precise label Syjuco claims as the most descriptive of this relationship: "I eventually decided that [Salvador] was more avuncular than pederastic" although "at times he was even fatherly."<sup>25</sup> A paternal relationship is one that Miguel resists, however, given his aversion to such denomination. Perhaps this is due to the perverse Oedipality that such a designation might signify given that Salvador himself was driven by a narrative impulse to "fuck his father Miguel

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 73.

Syjuco does not want to fuck his father.<sup>26</sup> Given his anxious assertions delineating how masculine embodiments rub up against one another in the space of Enlightenment, it seems obvious that Syjuco knows that there is something queer about Filipino knowledge-making as the homosocial matrix of “avuncular,” “pederastic,” and tutorial relationships among male intellectuals gestures inexorably towards an unwanted queer affiliation.<sup>27</sup> However, by *Ilustrado*’s own narrative pronouncement, male-on-male intellectual action inevitably submits to a queer kind of kinship. Such queer consciousness results in peculiarly anxious performances of heteromascularity where he “make[s] Crispin aware of the boundaries of our friendship.”<sup>28</sup> When offered a research position to help Salvador with his then titled *obra maestra* “TBA,” Miguel accepts “even though sudden apprehension rose up inside me regarding our developing relationship – a dandy with few friends, estranged from his family, solicitous toward me, never had children.”<sup>29</sup> Despite the queer dandy curmudgeon that the childless Salvador is characterized as, biological reproduction is not construed as an intellectually vacuous pursuit divorced from the revolutionary potential of a global Philippine literature.

In a scene where the lion of Philippine letters waxes nostalgic about the affect of perennial regret amidst a lifetime of literary excellence we observe that, despite the laude and laurels Salvador has acquired for a globally recognized oeuvre, “even literature has its limitations.”<sup>30</sup> He further pontificates, “with every year comes new regrets, Miguel. You’ll have your collection of them...I’m sorry you didn’t know your parents. But there’s more to life than

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>27</sup> Could it be stated that the productiveness of *Ilustrado* is that the homosociality of Filipino Enlightenment points to moments of queer slippages that demonstrate that making knowledge about the Filipino and Filipino history is also to make sexual knowledge and to delineate a history of sexuality in the Philippines?

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 73.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 72-73.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 121.

that.” Miguel routinely confronts the instability of living an orphaned life and for this reason turned to the magical potential of literature where “at least I can control what happens. We can create, revise...if we succeed we can change the world.” The way this conversation ends is a paradigm drama for this odd couple:

Crispin’s face was like how I imagine my father’s to have been, magnanimous and amused. “Changing the world,” he said, “is good work if you can get it. But isn’t having a child a gesture of optimism in that world?”

“Ugh. That’s a little twee for my taste.”

“Seriously, intellectually speaking. Consider it a moment.”

“Sometimes we just aren’t given a choice in the matter.”<sup>31</sup>

Salvador’s intellectual dandyism and childlessness is juxtaposed with Miguel’s unexpected paternity. The orphaned bastard of intellectual heritage becomes a father at seventeen when he unexpectedly gets his lover, Sadie, pregnant, much to the chagrin of his wealthy politico grandparents. He decides to father the child and “do right” despite his family’s Catholic protestations. Miguel, as fictional protagonist, represents a queering of kinship. He did not know his parents. The familial nuclearity that could represent a transmission of national knowledge is obstructed by his parents’ untimely death. Yet such genealogical transmission is somehow reasserted through reproduction albeit in an ostensibly non-normative way (out of wedlock). While the paternity of the protagonist represents a clear reassertion of Miguel’s heteromascularity, it is tangential to the dominant paradigm of kinship that is represented through the network of enlightenment. The most prominent kinship network is established through the mentorship of Salvador and by extension a national masculinist hagiography.

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 121-122.



David Eng's work on queer diasporas and kinships seems to be a particularly insightful theoretical vector to elaborate male-on-male intercourse within enlightenment relations, tempered, of course, by the prophylactic of postcolonial heteromascularity:

Reconceptualizing diaspora not in conventional terms of ethnic dispersions, filiation, and biological traceability, but rather in terms of queerness, affiliation, and social contingency[,] "queer diaspora" emerges as a concept providing new methods of contesting traditional family and kinship structures – of reorganizing national and transnational communities based not on origin, filiation, and genetics but on destination, affiliation, and the assumption of a common set of social practices or political commitments.<sup>32</sup>

By investing familial and epistemological energy into Salvador and the posthumous recuperation of his masterpiece, Miguel frontloads a genealogy of relations based in the Filipino enlightenment principles of literary patrimony – a genealogy that is, on the one hand, destabilized by the queer eruptions that are constitutive of its articulation, and, on the other, reliant on the narrative visibility of homosocial bonding. The relationship and production of knowledges embedded in the "pederastic" tutelage of Miguel and Crispin become located outside of nuclearity.<sup>33</sup> What might these designations mean in a narrative about the protagonist's own *ilustración* or enlightenment toward finding a novel that will reveal all? While there are productive slippages in Filipino masculinity, particularly in the ways in which enlightened men form "avuncular" relationships with one another to produce knowledge, it is evident that other

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<sup>32</sup> David Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*, (Durham: Duke UP, 2010).

<sup>33</sup> Syjuco, 121.

forms of queerness, queer embodiments, and Filipina feminism are evacuated from the categorical imperative of “*ilustrado*.”

As stated previously, Miguel’s investigation sees the narrative move back and forth between New York and Manila. In one particularly stunning and long scene in *Ilustrado* (the longest, in fact) we observe Miguel fastidiously question writers of the Manilenyo literary community during a public queer poetry reading that serves as background noise for the dialogue. This scene is the longest experience that the reader has in contemporary Philippine culture (as rendered by the author) and one of the few moments in the novel where we find alternative representations of Filipino social difference that are not wholly predetermined or constituted by Salvador’s literary and political oeuvre (that is, it is not cited directly from one of the works that composes the canonical backdrop of *Ilustrado*’s narrative). We can observe how Crispin Salvador was indeed the most visible Filipino writer to the West and how this made him a controversial figure in Filipino letters. One of the axioms that *Ilustrado* postulates is that with global notoriety as a postcolonial author comes the critique of your authenticity. We can thus observe Miguel’s own vexed relationship (as author and character), given his status as a North American expatriate, with authenticity discourses surrounding Filipino literature. The scene involves an extended dialogue between “inauthentic” and “authentic” Filipino writers.

Miguel interviews Furio and Rita. Furio Almondo is described as “a jack-of-all-trades scribbler” with “a proletarian pride in his pugnacious body odor” whose “fiction is consistently infused with Magical Realism and a seventies bravura of one who survived being imprisoned by Marcos.” Rita Rajah, a “Muslim poetess from Mindanao,” is famous for a mere “five poems she

wrote in 1972, '73, and '79."<sup>34</sup> Neither Furio nor Rita are shy about their posthumous disdain for Crispin Salvador's work especially because it serves as the primary vehicle through which Filipino literary enterprise is world-ed. Miguel's protestations that "Crispin wasn't anything but Filipino" don't stop Rita and Furio from affirming that he "wasn't fucking relevant."<sup>35</sup> Still, Miguel's interlocutors, and by extension the Philippine literary community, all desire "the most visible Filipino writer in the world to be more authentically Filipino" by "writing in Tagalog, or one of the dialects." According to Rita "writing in English about the Philippines for the entertainment of foreigners" is "the height of luxuriating arrogance."<sup>36</sup> When referencing the nascent revolutionary potential of Salvador's infamous work, *Bridges Ablaze*, Furio dismisses it as not illuminating anything new about the Philippines: "we already know that our country is a feudal kingdom."<sup>37</sup> However, it seems that it is precisely the revolution that Salvador aspired to literarily render that Furio and Rita both envision and vehemently critique. Political figures in the Philippines, including "Senator Nuredin Bansamoro," state that an "economic boom is just around the corner." Although the migrant export economy through which the Philippine state operates demonstrates that "the boom's artificial, just remittances from Overseas Foreign Workers. First World dollars fattening a Third World pig."<sup>38</sup> The appearance of this critique is interesting and important to the ways in which Miguel Syjuco as author positions *Ilustrado* and enlightenment relations. His novel about diaspora and intellectual legacies (rooted in Hispano-Filipino 19<sup>th</sup> century scholarship) is also imagined as a critique of the migrant export economy upon which the Philippines relies in the contemporary moment. Syjuco himself has been

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 163.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 163-164.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 165.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 166.

interviewed about the ways in which he imagines the diasporic backdrop of his intellectual bildungen.<sup>39</sup> The Filipino diaspora seems to never be wrested from the asymmetrical economics that produce labor migration and its attendant socio-cultural disruptions. Making things “whole” in realms of representation is also deeply embedded in interrogating such economic conditions that have principally constituted the ways in which the Philippines has been articulated to the world through the circulation of its texts and its migrant bodies. Rather than a migrant Filipina standing in for the Philippines as global actor, Syjuco instead postulates a diasporic intellectual as the paragon of Filipino global subjecthood – the *ilustrado*. Syjuco profits from the entrenched epistemological legacy of global travelers like intellectual expatriates José Rizal, Juan Luna, Pardo de Tavera and, later, Teodoro Kalaw and Manuel Quezon, to position a new discourse for Filipino nationhood. I contend that rather than imagine Filipino bodies as cheap labor inputs in international schemes of capitalism, Syjuco instructs his reader in the literary outputs of a learned Filipino cultural elite. The *ilustrado* is then not a distant historical figure of bygone days of an enlightened revolution, but a new and worldly cosmopolitan subject returning to make broken things whole again. The intellectual fulfillment of Miguel’s semi-autobiographical reflection of his return from the diaspora is positioned as a necessary albeit voluntary migration, although it is certainly fraught with uncertainty and emotional turmoil. You can leave the diaspora but it doesn’t ever seem to leave you.

In the same scene partially described above, wherein Miguel interviews members of the Philippine literati (Furio and Rita) in order to ascertain the state of mind of Salvador in the time before his death, we can see a clear although not initially obvious political statement regarding

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<sup>39</sup> “Miguel Syjuco Interview in Sweden 29 Nov 2010.” *Youtube.com*. Last modified 7 December 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U55f-ADJvlc>

which bodies compose the Filipino Enlightenment and which do not. As Syjuco is aggressively questioned on his compromised authenticity as a Filipino writer, he is saved “from the awkwardness” by “a pimply young woman...bounding onto the plywood dais” where various queer poets’ works are performed that intercalate the principal dialogue between Miguel, Rita, and Furio. The “pimply” woman “looks like an ugly version of Alice B. Toklas. She wears a white shirt with a stylized Philippine flag and AFEMASIAN silkscreened on it.”<sup>40</sup> Miguel’s dialogue with Rita and Furio continue as the poetry continues as the “ugly...Alice B. Toklas...is replaced by a fat man wearing the exact same outfit as she...[who] clasps his hands to his chest and recites the prose poem in the same heightened enunciation as she did, like taffy being made.”<sup>41</sup> The “fat man” metaphorically dies as a “trio to the side, each wearing AFEMASIAN shirts, claps enthusiastically.”<sup>42</sup> The “fat man” continues with a poem broken up by Salvador-centric dialogue, which I have reconstructed here:

“There,” reads the poet. “In the Lupas Landcorp Mall...  
...by the men’s bathroom stall...  
...by the mart for your shoes...  
...by the bee that is jolly...  
...by the fruit that is juicy...  
...by the frozen circle that’s for skating...  
...I see how crooked is every straight guy...  
...enclined in a closet...  
...of macho lonesomeness...”

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 164.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 165.

...like a beer-battered butterfly...  
...in a crystal chrysalis...  
...on the plate placed before me...  
...My mouth, my spoon. My cock, my tremulous fork.”<sup>43</sup>

What should we make of this queer background noise that peppers Miguel’s efforts to understand the final days of Salvador’s life?<sup>44</sup> How should we read the “ugly” “Alice B. Toklas” wearing an “AFEMASIAN” (a fictional Asian feminist/queer group) shirt and the fat queers that reflect on “tremulous” cocks in mall bathrooms? The juxtaposition of the closeted machos and Filipino *ilustrados* is a suspicious rhetorical device deployed in the scene. The queer disruptions that might provide alternative hermeneutics with which to read the Enlightenment are deeply questioned and ultimately derided in this scene. Syjuco, I argue, aims to articulate an *ilustrado* juxtaposed against the foil of queer cultural production and the nonnormative “fat” queer bodies that compose it. The bakla<sup>45</sup> becomes an “impossible” subject in the modern Philippine Enlightenment that Syjuco configures. I contend that these poets’ presence is a pivotal queer moment in the plot’s movement towards uncovering the polemical masterpiece that is *Bridges Ablaze* and the intellectual project of stitching together the various threads of Miguel and Salvador’s illustrious vita. Syjuco’s is a demonstrative narrative elaborating how the *ilustrado* Salvador is deserving of the mantle of intellectual luminary of Philippine letters. The comedic

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 165-166.

<sup>44</sup> “queer background noise” of the Enlightenment project?

<sup>45</sup> “Bakla” is the Tagalog/Filipino word for “effeminate gay man.” Although the word doesn’t have the same explicative charge as the English word “faggot,” the effeminacy of male gay embodiment is routinely seen as a social deformation in Philippine society by both the heteronormative state and by gay rights groups. For more information on the social meanings of “bakla,” I recommend Martin Manalansan’s *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora* (2003).

placement of the “AFEMASIAN” queers represents a constellation of texts, readings, interpretations, and performances undeserving of the literary and historical canonization that *Ilustrado* strives for. However, their inevitable queer representation demonstrates the kinds of disruptions that enlightenment discourse performs within its own narrativization. Indeed, the scene asks us to ponder: how could a bathroom blowjob and fat queers be part of the hallowed space of Philippine Enlightenment? How could queer contemporary letters in the Philippines compare to the scholastic Hispanic achievements of *La ilustración filipina*? How could feminist/queer organizations like the fictional “AFEMASIAN” compare with the scholastic efforts to congeal a nationalist historiography to validate the transhistorical existence of the Philippine nation-state? Indeed, in Gopinath’s figuration, these Filipino queers (the fat ones and the brown Alice B. Toklases) are “impossible” subjects in the intellectual genealogy postulated in *Ilustrado*. And when they do arise, they emerge only as pathological – “too queer to rehabilitate” – or too derivative of the pristine cultural forms of the Filipino heteromasculine canon that they inevitably only ever imitate.<sup>46</sup> The impossibility of these too-queer-to-rehabilitate subjects into nationalist canonicity is circumscribed by the equal and coeval impossibility of the Salvadorian manuscript meant to expose the corruption and fragmentations that thwart a global Filipino literature. Equally impossible and equally mythical as *Bridges* is its feminine guardian: Dulcinea.

### *La Isla Dulcinea*

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<sup>46</sup> Puar, 170.

I have argued thus far that *Ilustrado* indexes the seductive pull of a nationalist patrimonial canon that is a salve for the fragmentation constitutive of Filipino history and subjectivity. The narrative of illustration enacted by Miguel's search for *Bridges Ablaze*, the mythic Filipino masterwork par excellence, is also a search for totality and unity. I have also argued that this search is an ethnographic entrapment of Filipino subjectivities into the epistemic legacy and historical figure of the *ilustrado*. We see such modes of incorporation and searches for "wholeness" in a polysemous fabric of narratives etched across historical time. Nowhere are the fragmented segments of Philippine historical experience and a need for rootedness in a particular mode of canonicity truer than the ending of Syjuco's ambitious novel. The mythical *Bridges of Salvador* is finally uncovered on the apparently fictional Philippine island of "Dulcinea." Indeed, the Cervantian windmill fantasy of Dulcinea being incorporated into the very cartography of the Philippine nation speaks to the legacy of a protracted Spanish Enlightenment project, which sets the very terms of rational transparency upon which *Ilustrado*'s narrative relies. Such a legacy is further substantiated by the apocryphal mention of Dulcinea's presence in Juan Luna's *Spoliarium*: "There is a figure in the *Spoliarium* that I think you should see. A woman in the background, just standing there. Wearing a red cloak half wrapped around her face. The way she looks, it's as if Juan Luna knew Dulcinea when he painted her."<sup>47</sup>

The final chapter of *Ilustrado* sees the protagonist traveling by air to Dulcinea to finally solve the mystery fueling his search. It is here the reader discovers that rather than (just) being a woman and literary figure, Dulcinea is a "comma-shaped jewel protected by a chain of seven sugar coated emeralds on a bolt of blue velvet. Made civilized and given a name after millennia remaining nameless. La Isla Dulcinea." Miguel muses that this is "the final airplane journey until

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<sup>47</sup> Syjuco, 242-243.



it's all whole;" the future global propagation of Filipino writing as haute literature is the stakes of this journey.<sup>48</sup> Although the island is made "civilized" through its feminine naming, it is clear that it is also "uninhabited...unclaimed by people."<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the ghostly absence of people, juxtaposed with the trappings of civilization of Metro Manila, adds to the dreamy ephemerality of Miguel's final destination.<sup>50</sup> As he finally approaches the beachside bungalow where his Salvador transformed "fiction into memory" he finds that it is recently abandoned as if his mentor had just left "the warm curls of the keys of [his] old Underwood."<sup>51</sup>

"Dulcinea" takes on an ephemeral quality in the narration of *Ilustrado*.

Earlier I suggested that the excavation of the mythical *The Bridges Ablaze* was a historiographical maneuver to rehearse the "romantic bullshit" of Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere*. I would add that the physical and psychic border crossing into "la isla Dulcinea" also positions a Golden Age Spanish literary origin of Filipino literatures. The reader is made to imagine that

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 307.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 313.

<sup>50</sup> Such a dreamscape border crossing into the island of Dulcinea is further substantiated by the Sixth Sense inspired epilogue written from the perspective of a living Salvador reflecting on the death of his student, Miguel. Not only is time fractured in *Ilustrado* but so is narrative fidelity. While the impulse and narrative ascription to a Filipino *weltliteratur* continues to be the principal impetus of the novel, especially in light of the Nobel-esque anointment of its prose, such a narrative divergence fueled by the death of the protagonist recasts his search for *Bridges* as a styxian border crossing. However, rather than emphasizing the tenuousness of a stable Filipino subject and Filipino canonicity, I argue that this rhetorical tactic does the very opposite – it stresses the need for the centrality of the *ilustrado* in Filipino world making. Once more, the crossing into a Golden Age cartographic impression of Hispanic literary excellence as a further referent for Filipino Enlightenment thought transforms Dulcinea not only into an island, but a literary ideal. He diverges from the Cervantian style of critique of "novelas de caballería" and embraces a tone resonant with an enlightenment trajectory for the nation. While Cervantes' parody of errant knighthood embodied in the figure of a decrepit don Quijote can be read as a critique of a particular form of idealized masculinity, Syjuco's quixotic citation via the geographic inscription of Dulcinea into the very cartography of the Philippines invests itself in a curious romanticization of masculinist enlightenment that is hard to reconcile with the man from the la Mancha. The *ilustrados* are fighting real monsters, real "bêtes noires," not windmills.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 312.

Dulcinea is a woman who is the custodian of the manuscript for which Miguel desperately searches: "...you want to find Dulcinea. Because you think she has something for you. Because you're searching."<sup>52</sup> Miss Florentina, a friend of Salvador's who possesses special knowledge regarding Dulcinea, states that Dulcinea is finally "free":

I don't know if I should tell you how to find her. She's now free, you know?"

I'm sorry?

Dulcinea.

...She's out in the world, making it her own.<sup>53</sup>

We discover that it was Florentina that inspired Salvador to take pen to paper in the first place and that Dulcinea was the inspiration: "Despite my better judgment, I told him: Go find your Dulcinea."<sup>54</sup> Florentina then tells Miguel to forget about the *Bridges Ablaze*: "Forget that. Go find your Dulcinea."<sup>55</sup> Dulcinea, then, becomes part of the inspiration for Enlightenment in the first place. Indeed, the search for *Bridges Ablaze* doubles as a search for the equally mythic Dulcinea. So, one of the most famous female characters in all of Hispanic letters, or, at least, an echo of her, becomes the driving force of Syjuco's articulation of a new "*ilustrado*." However, asserting the Golden Age quixotic fantasy of Dulcinea through which the errant knight masculinity of Don Quixote is measured and enacted must be reconciled with the feminism of *Ilustrado*.

While Salvador admirably began his career as an exposé journalist critiquing, for instance, the "police brutality during the Culatingan Massacre," it was his masculinist politics

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 240.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 243.

and the kinds of amorous relations that such a politics precludes that catapulted him to infamy in Philippine literary circles. Highlighted in *Ilustrado*'s prologue is a young Salvador's "milestone essay...titled 'It's Hard to Love a Feminist'." This firm anti-feminist stance should not surprise us given the disdain for intersectional forms of difference that have apparently co-opted a stable Filipino subject. It should furthermore not surprise us that those that would critique such blatant intellectual misogyny are characterized as "a grab bag of effeminate academic men and thick-waisted female activists." This characterization presages the queer Tagalog rapping of Emily Dickinson and the homely Alice B. Toklases that populate the queer underside of the Philippine Enlightenment as described above. The intellectual infamy of Salvador, which provides the narrative scaffolding for the bildungsromanesque search for *Bridges Ablaze*, is described in his words as "not chauvinistic, but realistic for a poor country with greater bêtes noires than those raised at that recent symposium, 'Changing *History* into *Herstory*'." <sup>56</sup> This prologue clears the ground for the kind of epistemology that will structure the narration of the "new *ilustrados*." This latter symposium is presumably the intellectual-activist collective that prompted his realization that feminists are difficult to love. It is not difficult to imagine that Miguel inherits a similar disdain for queer of color difference given the withering characterization such non-canonical maneuvers receive in the queer poetics of 'AFEMASIAN' elaborated above. However, one might find such antiquarian politics curious in light of Miguel Syjuco's own political concerns around the relation between the capitalist formation of the Filipino diaspora and the racialized gendered relations of asymmetrical global economics:

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 6.

They've been forced to go abroad to seek their fortunes because the social conditions at home are not conducive to earning a decent or honest living. So there is a tragedy in the making where all these people are leaving. Many of them are nannies, many of them are maids who have children at home. They go abroad, they raise other peoples' children and their kids at home are almost orphans in a way being raised by fathers or grandparents. So what we have right now, what we're seeing now, I believe, is a tragedy in the making. You're forced to leave your home, to live abroad to earn dollars, which you remit home. I think that we remit something like 15 billion dollars a year, the Filipino diaspora remits 15 billion dollars each year, which props up the economy. And this previous presidential administration was happy to just take that to prop up the economy rather than develop policies and reforms that would stop that flow of people instead they choose to train Filipinos to send them abroad rather than work their resources so that they could provide opportunities to keep them home. Or better yet to let the expatriate Filipinos return. It's a tragedy in that we are still going downhill. At the same time it's changing the social climate at home as well as changing the social climate of Filipinos living abroad...it is tearing families apart to a certain extent.<sup>57</sup>

The global context in which Syjuco's fiction circulates also attends and cognitively maps other components of and conditions through which the Filipino diaspora is formed. It is remarkable that Filipino children are only orphans with the absence of the mother by Syjuco's own admission. Filipina social roles are seen as the locus of familial and national stability, *and* simultaneously, female migrant labor roles ("nannies" and "maids") are the cause of social instability ("they raise other people's children"). The export labor economy delimits the

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<sup>57</sup> "Miguel Syjuco Interview in Sweden 29 Nov 2010." *Youtube.com*. Last modified 7 December 2010. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U55f-ADJvlc>

possibility of complete self-determination for the Philippines, as remittances are a precarious form of economic sustainability and national continuity. Syjuco himself argues that his novel should be read within the context of the Filipino diaspora and its intersections with the global political economy. Such a context makes diasporic return in *Ilustrado* strongly associated with a critique of migrant labor economies and its cultural effects on Philippine society. The stakes of a new Enlightenment and a global project of Filipino literature are economic as well as intellectual sovereignty. Nevertheless, we see that in Syjuco's indirect contextualization of his work these national issues to which the global project of literary wholeness becomes necessary are national or even female issues but *never* feminist ones.

I argue that the canon maneuvers of *Ilustrado* vie for another way to represent the Philippines to the world, reliant on the cognitive labor of the *ilustrado* rather than the bodily labor of the female care worker. I echo border theorists Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson's assessment of the proliferation of subjectivities in global economy through the juxtaposition of the "financial trader" and the "care worker."<sup>58</sup> It is through this juxtaposition that Mezzadra and Nielson critique the process of financialization as a process that has "impose[d] the discipline of debt on populations across the world and thus [has] contribute[d] to the conditions that encourage migration in the first place."<sup>59</sup> Therefore, the disciplining technology of debt produces subjects whose primary social relation to capitalism and citizenship is migration: "[although] carers and traders occupy seemingly opposite ends of the world labor spectrum in terms of gender, earnings, and the relative assignment of bodily and cognitive tasks...they are materially

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<sup>58</sup> Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013).

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

and symbolically linked with the global multiplication of labor.”<sup>60</sup> The precarity of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) juxtaposes the sovereign power Syjuco attempts to reproduce narratively. That is, the sovereign powers of transparency through which a Filipino enlightenment transpires is thrown into doubt by the economic affectibility that constitutes a migrant labor diaspora. This is important because Syjuco’s intellectual journey and current national literatures that cite “Philippine Enlightenment” cannot be separated from the stark economic realities through which Philippine nationalism is articulated. Indeed, Syjuco is not alone in drawing a transhistorical connection between postmodern economic formations and 19<sup>th</sup> century colonial intellectuality.<sup>61</sup>

The nation-building project whose cultural scaffold is a nationalist canon makes it difficult to disarticulate literature from political economy, especially if the end-goal is crafting a stable subject for the world. The cultural economies of literary representation and the hyperextraction of surplus value from feminized migrant labor begs the question: which figures are able to command the intellectual powers of “transparency” and whose labor gets to subtend such an articulation of rational power? Although there are productive re-readings of the “*ilustrado*” and the clout that it commands, the project of the Philippine Enlightenment does not appear to be dislodged from a masculine ontology, which makes any anti-capitalist critique it could imagine, at best, misguided and, at worst, engulfed into a capitalist patriarchy whose market category is filed under “*ilustrado*” literature. The postcolonial narrative articulation of intellectual emancipation benefits from the gendered division of cognitive and bodily labor thematized brilliantly by Mezzadra and Neilson through the figures of the “trader” and the “care

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>61</sup> The “Juana Change” series of the Artists’ Revolution group draws clear connections between the Hispanic intellectualism of the Enlightenment and contemporary migratory economics that characterize much Filipina experience.

worker.” It is, curiously, the conscious deployment of a national rhetoric of lionizing the Filipina migrant worker as a “bagong bayani” that disentangles Filipino national discourse from the sovereign powers of transparency that Filipino intellectualism historically fetishizes. In this way, Filipina migrant care work is the narrative unconscious of the Filipino Enlightenment and the “orphaned” *ilustrados* that would seek to be the heirs of its intellectual legacies.

Despite the gravity that the diaspora exerts in *Ilustrado*, Syjuco does an equally effective job making it disappear. Even as the author invests energy world-ing Philippine literature through its cosmopolitan prodigal *ilustrado* and a sublimated critique of global economy, the embedded patriarchy of the Philippine Enlightenment project causes an uneven articulation of which subjects can experience intellectual emancipation and bear “the yoke of revolution.” I analyze this uneven articulation through the simple observation of the gendered embodiment of the queer dejecta elaborated in this same scene, because the background substrate of this dialogue is the queer poetry reading. It is not only the abnormal and pathological sexuality of the poets that is critiqued by the narrative progression (a pathology that is resolved through the heterosexual paternity of Miguel later in the story, in fact, just a few more pages into the same scene!) but also the female and feminized embodiment of the performers. The pathology that such feminization elicits in this scene contradicts the political critique of migratory economics that Syjuco claims to have been the underlying mode of production of his narrative. “La Isla Dulcinea” illustrates another mode of production of Filipino literature: a Golden Age of Hispanic literary production circumscribed by the attainment of an idealized feminine subject. Such a literary ideality is tempered by the feminized care work that subtends the very historical desire for a Philippine enlightened subject. This begs the question: can an emancipatory project that

invests political energy into the heteromasculine figure of the *ilustrado* actually perform the radical critique of asymmetrical economics that the author avers is so important for a world Philippine literary project? The answer is no. Gender as a category of analysis is absolutely crucial in understanding the cultural and social cost of remittance economics, as the predominant overseas labor pool exported all over the world is comprised of Filipinas. Such stories cannot be allowed to “fall away,” to borrow the eloquent figuration coined by Neferti Tadiar.<sup>62</sup> Not to mention, the national discourse of “mga bagong bayani” (new heroes) relies on the figure of the Filipina and the feminization of labor to buttress the elegizing rhetoric that abides migrant labor’s continued export. However, if female embodiment and its pathological masculinization (“an ugly version of Alice B. Toklas” connotes both an over Americanization and an over-lesbianization of Filipino embodiment) can be cast aside and ridiculed so readily in a pivotal moment in *Ilustrado*’s narrative, then how can we look to the Enlightenment discourse that produces the *ilustrado* as the intellectual space through which we can accurately and ethically map the Filipino diaspora.

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<sup>62</sup> Neferti Tadiar, *Things Fall Away: Philippine Historical Experience and the Makings of Globalization*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009).



## CONCLUSION

*What does a Postcolonial Disability Studies critique of the enlightenment look like?*

In this dissertation, I have sought to queer “lo filipino.” The analytical insistence on a Spanish (not necessarily Hispanophone all of the time) tradition of Filipino writing performs productive queer linguistic work by problematizing the very languages in which we seek to produce knowledge. And as I have attempted to show in this dissertation, what I mean by such a “queer linguistics” strikes at the heart of the articulation of a subject historically and epistemologically endowed with certain inalienable capacities. For this reason, Filipino Studies has something to say to the intersection of disability and postcolonial studies.

“Normalcy” and “minority identity” politics, as critiqued by postcolonial disability studies scholars Clare Barker and Stuart Murray, are largely Western concepts upon which disability identity and theory are contingent.<sup>1</sup> I have attempted to engage these concepts in “global contexts” and historical periods to which they have not necessarily been applied.<sup>2</sup> While “normalcy” was not necessarily *the* prime site of critique of my engagement with the Hispanic American Philippines, the norming effects of postcolonial enlightenment certainly produce an ideal of the “normate” in attenuating the ideal of the nation. Here Garland-Thomson’s theory of

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<sup>1</sup> Clare Barker and Stuart Murray, “Disabling Postcolonialism: Global Disability Cultures and Democratic Criticism,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 61-73.

<sup>2</sup> Nirmala Erevelles, *Disability and Difference in Global Contexts: Enabling a Transformative Body Politic*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011).

the “normate”<sup>3</sup> can refer to several abelist constructions: the liberal human, the abstract citizen-subject, the autonomous (androcentric) able body, and, in my analysis, in various times and places, the *ilustrado*. Philippine-U.S. imperial relations, as well as the “Filipino Enlightenment” that struggled to navigate its way through American colonialism’s grasp, represents a fascinating historical convergence of the ideas of a “minority politics” and its uneasy relationship with the “normal.” In this way, I have gravitated toward Filipino Studies and various configurations of the “Filipino” for auto-ethnographic reasons as well as for its inherent queerness. I take my cue from Michael Warner’s expansion of queer disarticulating it from a sole insistence on homosexuality. He writes:

The preference for [the term] “queer” represents, among other things, an aggressive impulse of generalizations; it rejects a minoritizing logic of toleration or simple political interest-representation in favor of a more thorough resistance to regimes of the normal. ... For both academics and activists, 'queer' gets a critical edge by defining itself against the normal rather than the heterosexual. ... The insistence on 'queer' ... has the effect of pointing out a wide field of normalization, rather than simple intolerance, as the site of violence.<sup>4</sup>

I suggest through the prism of the archival intersection I have thematized throughout this project that “Filipino” similarly performs a critique of the “aggressive impulse” to generalize experience, literature, and culture. Indeed, it resists the canonical regimes that have ordered Hispanic, American, Asian American, Philippine, and even Latino/a histories and cultures. In this way, “Filipino” can also point “out a wide field of normalization[s]” that have shaped our

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<sup>3</sup> Garland-Thomson, 333-353.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Warner, “Introduction,” *Fear of a Queer Planet: Queer Politics and Social Theory*, ed. Michal Warner, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), xxvi.

engagements with race, gender, sexuality, ability, nation, and diaspora. And while crip theory has similar commitments, I suggest that through a Filipino Studies optic that disability studies should caution its toleration of invisibilized imperial histories.

In the political landscape of the Western industrialized nation, some of disability critique's priorities (whether in the form of political organizing or intellectual intervention) can be construed as a reformist critique of the state. In a transnational context, I would also claim this critique vis-à-vis neocolonial configurations of disability, which are firmly rooted in the imperial state through its obfuscation of racist colonial histories.<sup>5</sup> The very social, historical, political, and epistemic contexts in which the "social" and "medical" models of disability, so named, obtain are informed by disavowed imperial histories.<sup>6</sup> The responses to these models, whether aligned with or against such visions of disability theory and activism, can also be instantiations of coloniality. The "state" in this instance should not be theorized as a disembodied entity outside of history, but rather as the product of multiple colonial projects whose tactics of control are reliant on a global diffusion of "race." Furthermore, the theoretical and activist discourses that would challenge the ableist tendencies of such state formations must ethically embed such challenges with global histories of imperialism because of these histories traumatic engagement with race and racism. Racializing discourses are largely what have historically constructed our ideas of normal and normate; impaired and disabled; cognitively capable and mentally deficient; sovereign and subjugated. Such a deployment of race is the constitutive feature of Western

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<sup>5</sup> Here I'm referring to Britain and the United States more specifically as these are the sites in which the social model of disability gained traction as both a liberal political strategy to reform the State and an intellectual theoretical model.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Shakespeare, "The Social Model of Disability," *Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard Davis (New York: Routledge, 2013), 214-21.

imperial statecraft, which historically erupts as genocidal white supremacist violence. This is the way in which I would characterize the imperial interventions of the United States in the Philippines and the cultures that emerge in response. “Filipino,” I suggest, emerges to also to make sense of such political, martial, and social convulsions of systematic disablement under war, colonial subjugation, and protracted racial asymmetries in the diaspora.

A minority identity of disability, however radical and however necessary to ensure a quality of life for those that experience impairment in Western industrialized societies, relies on a liberal domestic framing which articulates disability’s lived traumas to the State (or Theory or History) by unconsciously leveraging the traumas of a mutilating colonial violence – an articulation that generally results in colonialism’s obfuscation as politically vital knowledge for a robust theory of global disability. That is Disability Studies can have the tendency of making an odd bedfellow with the very cultural operations of the compulsive omission of imperialism that has long been observed in Filipino American Studies, for instance. The stakes of this tension I convey in questioning what sorts of global disabilities are propounded in Euramerican accommodations of disability. Which bodies are accommodated? Which histories are we examining that have configured our understanding of such bodies in need of accommodation? Which bodies never even reach the threshold of visibility whereby they are even detectable in our theoretical framing? What historical pasts are erased such that we can achieve what Alison Kafer calls more “accessible futures?”<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, whether political organizing or scholarly intervention *should* solidify “disability” as a category of exclusion, deserving of special protection and consideration, is not the scope of this project. (Indeed, I think that this sort of

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<sup>7</sup> Alison Kafer, *Feminist Queer Crip* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 2013).

strategic essentialism is politically vital given the material precarity that characterizes disability in the world.) Rather, we should be attentive to the ways in which such intellectual or political moves (a disability theory) repeat patterns of compulsive omission that characterize US Empire's historical justification and invisibilization. My take on "radical" theory within liberal (read: imperial) democratic state formations allows me to furnish two critical observations of the major fields my dissertation engages with—Filipino Studies and Disability Studies:

(1) I challenge the rather obscurantist trajectory of a Filipino American cultural studies that privileges Anglophone and largely U.S.-based renderings of "Filipino experience" and

(2) I caution the ways that disability studies' deconstructive moves problematizing the primacy of the able-body (in its liberal humanist or biomedical configurations) can abstract such critiques from colonial history, race, and other liberal state formations that are *not* located in Europe or the United States.

The point that I would like to make here is that postcolonial enlightenment projects are similar to the "minority" identity politics that we might classify under the rubric of "disability." In fact, I would go as far as to say that all postcolonial enlightenment projects following in the "tradition" of the Haitian Revolution are anticolonial disability critiques.<sup>8</sup> Such gestures toward the emancipatory protocols of enlightened cognition are a means of discursively articulating a notion of citizenship that results from "disputes regarding the best way to discern the field of not-

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<sup>8</sup> See especially CLR James, *The Black Jacobins: Touissant L'Overture and the San Domingo Revolution*, (New York: Vintage, 1989).

disability.”<sup>9</sup> Such moves toward the epistemic sovereignty of Enlightenment, however problematic or ableist such a move by the *ilustrado* may be, cannot be disarticulated from the screen of colonial violence, which constitutes manifold projects of mass disablement through war, poverty, and categorical exclusion from the “human.” Indeed, such *ilustrado* discourse is itself a “dispute” of the systematic mass disablement that Spanish and U.S. colonial projects have enacted. Postcolonial Enlightenment, then, is an insistent corroboration of *capacity* under the duress of genocidal imperial violence. Even as the “nation” is disabled by the crimes of Empire, it survives.

Much disability theory has elaborated the virtues, or “standpoint,” that a disabled perspective has on the organization of society—what “cripistemological” discourses would call a “sitpoint.” Given the ways in which social organization has produced “disability” as a biopolitical category always already deviating from the “normal,” there is something epistemologically redemptive about centering the experiences of the disabled body, the body-in-pain, the socially deformed, or the politically abject. I am hesitant yet hopeful about including the postcolonial Filipino intellectual in this list of epistemic redemptive subjects given this intellectual’s always uneasy access of Enlightened cognition. We can generate critical questions about the world centering the disabled body that would not even cognitively register to many of us. Given such a context of social critique, what the field has termed, again, the “social model of disability,”<sup>10</sup> which is not reliant on the biomedical conceit of curing disability but rather prioritizes critiquing the workings of power that produce disability in the first place, we are faced

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<sup>9</sup> Clare Barker and Stuart Murray, “Disabling Postcolonialism: Global Disability Cultures and Democratic Criticism,” *The Disability Studies Reader*, ed. Lennard J. Davis, (New York: Routledge, 2013), 68.

<sup>10</sup> Shakespeare (2013), 214-21.

with a crucial question in the context of postcolonial enlightenment: from an epistemological perspective, is there something redemptive about the chronic poverty, dispossession, and “mass disablement” that constitutes the imperial project? This question might ring odd (or even unethical) for many sympathetic to a postcolonial critique of the “West,” of the enduring legacy of Orientalism, and of the anti-racist critique of the state-sponsored eradication of blackness. However, I ask this question not as a way of ethically disengaging from the problematics of imperial violence (in the name of fancy academic theory) but rather to re-center them as *embodied* experience. I ask such a question in the context of nation-building projects that aspire to Western models of geopolitical organization that rely on the exclusionary category of the “normal” even as they insistently affirm colonized bodies as human. Is the postcolonial nation simply a repetition of an ableist model of social control? Is there something qualitatively different about the postcolonial nation-state even while it can be said to be a reformist project that iterates the able-body as the ideal political subject? Moreover, does the critique of the postcolonial nation as a restorationist and statist project rely on a problematic disengagement from the mass disablement that produced the enlightenment protocol to build such a national project in the first place?

I hope to gesture towards the complications entailed in the “situated” critiques of disability as proffered by an incipient postcolonial disability studies. What constitutes “ability” and “disability” radically shifts depending on context. “Dis/ability” radically shifts definition in the context of colonial histories of disablement. We might critique Filipino Enlightenment for repeating the cognitive ableism that excluded them from humanity in the first place. However, in that critique I would be hesitant to begrudge or efface the revolutionary movements that such epistemic sovereignty inspired and the revolutionary potential incumbent in such anticolonial

histories. This is, however, not a move to fully redeem masculine intellectualism despite its problematic racialized investments in ability. Such a project would have major limitations.

One such limitation is that it renders opaque various kinds of feminized labors that ensure the construction of masculinist cognition as the underwriting protocol of the postcolonial Filipino nation. In this analysis the site of both cognitive extraction and surplus value (epistemic surplus value?) is the symbolic “Chinese Woman” and her deformed body; the Filipina supercrip fluent in languages that routinely exclude her; the trans-embodied indigenous culture worker; the silenced bad immigrant mother; the woman native other that I have re-configured as the crip native woman. In a postcolonial critique of disability or a move to “disable postcolonialism” as urged by theorists like Clare Barker, Stuart Murray, and Nirmala Erevelles, we can more fully interrogate what a disability studies critique of Enlightenment looks like. What I have attempted to articulate in this project is a deep suspicion for the wholesale rejection of the Enlightenment as always already reproducing the epistemic violence of the “normate” contrary to the political objectives of disability theory. Such a rejection of the Subject as straw man does not completely map onto histories of anticolonial revolution and its colonial after-effects like the ones that I center in the Philippines. Such a move, in which disability studies is so strong and where it makes its most powerful intervention in the West, if not situated assiduously can risk completely overwriting the claims and gains that anticolonialism in a global context has made against the West. However, I also find deeply troubling the ahistorical presumption of cognitive capacity embedded in romantic narrations of Philippine historiography and nationalist hagiography of the *ilustrados*.

Answering the question of “what does a postcolonial disability studies critique of the enlightenment look like” is certainly part of the project of “globalizing” or “transnationalizing” a



disability studies paradigm, questioning such a paradigm's assumptions, and understanding colonial history as a history of mass disablement. Such structures of disablement are the very strictures in which "postcoloniality," if there is even such a thing, finds itself bound. What I have demonstrated in the space of this chapter is that one effect of the strictures of disability is a vigorous *capacity* – that of epistemological sovereignty, the promise of the "brains of the nation" that the Philippine Enlightenment historically represents for a nation that has survived over three-hundred years of Spanish colonialism, almost fifty years of direct American imperial rule, a bloody Japanese bombardment during the Second World War, and a continued economic precarity. However, the fact that such economic precarity is, in part, sustained by a migrant labor export economy of a largely feminized labor pool speaks to the political necessity of reading/defining the Philippine Enlightenment as part of the "international division of cognitive capacity," which produces manifold historical permutations of gendered, economic, and racial debilities. The argument represents one beginning: how the 20<sup>th</sup> century international division of labor that American imperialism created between itself and its custodial population in the Philippines relied on a historical repetition of a division of cognitive capacity.

This dissertation has also engaged Philippine nation and diaspora as vectors of language loss. Many scholars, writers, and artists have reflected on this sometimes beautifully and tragically. Processes of acculturation are seductively explained as loss – a departure from a homeland manifesting as a departure from a coherent unified cultural origin and self. I first encountered such perspectives not in Asian American culture or studies; rather, my first exposure to Ethnic Studies was in a Spanish Department. Taking advantage of curricular offerings sharply attenuated to shifting Hispanic demographics in the hyper-segregated city of Milwaukee, marked my coming into a Filipino

consciousness among Latina/o heritage speakers—a consciousness not completely engulfed by the mixed-race cohabitation of US Naval bases that informed my childhood in the Subic Bay, Tokyo, San Francisco, and North Chicago. A strange and ironic military trajectory as I was born in the Philippines during the twilight of martial law—my migration was explained to me as an escape from it—leaping from the arms of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos into the lap of US empire. One of my first lucid memories is Corazon Aquino delivering a speech to the US’s Congress, teaching Americans about the merits of democracy through the success of People Power and EDSA.

As a much younger adult I came out in the streets of Xalapa, Mexico mouthing the Caribbean inflections of Xalapeño Spanish. My brownness allowed me to navigate the colonial ports of the Gulf of Mexico like a weird Filipino flaneur, misrecognized as the “mexicano de ojos achinados” or the “Mexican with chinky eyes.” Why am I telling you this? What can we make of these racial and linguistic slippages and errors?

Initially, my radical education involved the study of Latin American independence literatures. I was invested in understanding the protracted effects of Spanish colonialism on national traditions of 19th century emancipation cultures -- mainly of Mexico. I realized quickly that the geography that governed the field was narrowly dual: Iberia and Latin America. To be visible, one had to be legible within this geographic understanding of the Hispanic world. My engagement with the Spanish language and studies of minor literatures materialized through a mixed heritage that I wasn’t able to fully explain. My mentors were unaware of the contributions of Hispanophone Filipinos to theories of liberation. Liberation through culture was, to my

mind, incomplete. Indeed, where was the Philippines in studies of literatures in Spanish? Was this colony so “peculiar” that it became effaced from the literary methodologies of studies of Spanish in the United States?

I don't pose these questions as if I was super edified; indeed, I myself did not even know the Philippines was a Spanish colony. However, my professors seeing an overly eager Filipino undergraduate in their Spanish classes didn't seem to surmise Spanish imperialism as a point of pedagogical contact or common ground. What I learned, instead, was an inventory of forms and literary traditions: Golden Age, Latin Boom Literature, Post-Boom, Naturalism, Romanticism, Baroque Theatre; juxtaposed against them all was my initial reading of *Borderlands/La Frontera*, which seemed to call attention to the Spanish language qua Spanish more than Renaissance Hispanism ever did and at once seemed the most relatable to my experience as a Filipino American in the US learning Spanish. Anzaldúa actually and compassionately spoke to gay hybrid men as part of a feminist consciousness and borderlands that called on me to speak Spanish not as a matter of formal conservatism but as part of a political grammar where English and Castilian were deemphasized and broken, deficient Spanishes were valorized. How can Filipinos as former Spanish denizens not be involved in this political project? My dissertation suggests the linguistic incapacity of Filipinos to speak Spanish is a lack not to be rehabilitated but rather that it serves as a productive theoretical and methodological entry point.

I thus engaged a multidisciplinary and multilingual approach to the study of literatures from the Philippines, Filipino America, and the US-Mexican Borderlands. Rather than approach the Philippines from the more traditional route of doctoral work in

Spanish & Portuguese, I instead gravitated toward American Culture at the University of Michigan—an institution that boasts the most impressive archival collections on the Philippines in the Western Hemisphere. Indeed, Filipino Americanist Sarita Echavez See has remarkably inveighed, “London is to India as Ann Arbor is to the Philippines.” I came to realize that, unlike Spanish departments, Ethnic and American Studies not only included the Philippines but also made it a foundational case study precipitating the turn toward studies of US Empire. The Philippines became a symbol for a transnational understanding of US history and racial formation—however, through rather monolingual archives that I can’t help but think resignify the American exceptionalism Empire studies critiques in the first place.

As a Michigan graduate student, I became interested in the ways in which the very formation of colonial archives about the Philippines were predicated not only on asymmetries in economic and political power. I also observed how such asymmetries corresponded to underlying racialized gendered ideas around the cognitive and physical capacity of the Filipino native subject. The native feminine and often effeminized Philippine “indio” (Indian) appears in multiple languages and archival sources across Spain, the United States, and the Philippines. And really as a Filipino who didn’t grow up speaking Tagalog, who had to learn it through Title VI funding in Madison, WI, I learned Spanish really well; I, then, honestly ponder a deceptively simple question: what does it mean when a national body of literature’s linguistic home is not its geographic home? What kind of disability is that? What can be gleaned from the absent presence of language as itself a kind of enunciation of a cultural politics?

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